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AUSTRALIAN THEMES

New histories for old by Donald Horne

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Randolph Stow on 'Poor Fellow My Country'

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Sentimental blokes by Kenneth Minogue

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Aborigines, Nietzscheans, Diplomats, Communists

Poems by A. D. Hope, Judith Wright, Les Murray

"The Footballers", a signed painting by Leroy Leveson Lourent Joseph de Moistro, which will be auctioned by Christie's in Melbourne on Wednesday, April 28, in a sale of Australian paintings, drawings and prints and European paintings and tapestry. A further sale of Australiana on April 29 includes first editions of Bligh's Narrative of the Mutiny on the Bounty (1790) and the vellum conveyance of 265,000 acres of New Zealand land sold by Maori chiefs for £150-worth of arms and merchandise.

Barry Humphries on nostalgia
Peter Porter on new poetry
Eric Partridge on dictionaries

PLUS

Harold Pinter; Sutton Hoo; Genealogy; Medieval women

Gumm into Garland; Blue movies in Manhattan

The rough and the smooth

By Donald Horne

FRANK CROWLEY (Editor): A New History of Australia
639pp. Heinemann. £6.50.

I would have liked to have hired two of those painters who used to paint great moments in history, at the time when history was still acknowledged to have great moments, and set them up in front of Parliament House, Canberra, in February this year. There was the Governor General, glittering with his three orders, in black hat and morning dress, the one form of attire that remains an exclusive symbol of English-speaking upper-classness. Across the road, in their T-shirts and thongs, were the demonstrators. The hand played "God Save the Queen". The demonstrators held up protest placards and shouted insults. I would have told one painter to do no more than a picture called "Sir John Kerr Defies the Mob". The other painter would do a picture called "The People Speak".

These two pictures would represent the conflicting images of those most intensely moved at one extreme or the other, by this unusual occasion, at which the Labor Party was to make its protest against being mocked by Kerr last November by boycotting those parts of the opening of the new parliament that required his presence.

They would also have represented two of the rival themes in writing about Australian history. On one side are rough democracy, as portrayed in Russel Ward's *The Australian Legend* and elsewhere, a general emphasis on the labour movement, the cradling of Cyril Pearl's *The Wild Men of Sydney*. On the other side is the story of the long craving for respectability, the ideal that we might all of us become good, wise, prosperous, responsible, as expressed in works such as Michael Roe's brilliantly conceived and unfailingly written *Australian Ideas* (1959-1962). Each painting could then be reproduced on dust-jackets for one of the two general views of Australian history, the rough view and the smooth.

By the dust-jacket test *A New History of Australia*, edited by Frank Crowley, belongs to the smooth school, the school of respectability. On the jacket is a reproduction of an engraving of the beauty and chivalry of Melbourne's fashionable world, splendid figures on the women, gleaming silk hats on the men, as they parade around "The Block" in Collins Street, Melbourne. But there is an irony in it. The engraving was published in February 1890 and if you know any Australian history you know that the real estate rush is about to help the money flow will dry up, the boom will burst; then behind the provincial elegance will be found a crude Threepenny Opera world of bustling commerce and high-placed crooks.

Before using the book as an excuse for a sermon on writing about Australian history I must say I liked it very much. I was given it for Christmas, among some novels, and read it as one of them. Like any symposium it jumps in perspective, but it is wide in scope, reliable, and I have found it a useful reference work for students. Its editor is one of the second-wave pioneers of the professional study of Australian history and the twelve contributors include almost the whole range of practitioners. It has the advantage, for the purpose of this article, of being so comprehensive in the various kinds of possible approaches to writing about Australian history that it is close to typical. So I can review the work of Australian historians by reviewing this book.

First point: it includes work from both the scholars of credibility and the scholars of respectability, but significantly, both are equally democratic. As noted by R. M. Crawford almost twenty years ago in a tentative opening move that came to nothing much more than his own pamphlet *An Australian Perspective*, it is possible to write about either in Australian history. Unfortunately practically no one does. In *A New History of Australia*, T. H. Irving begins his chapter on the 1850s and the 1860s by telling about the ruling class", but in some other chapters I could not detect even a formal recognition that there can be elites and that they have certain types of habits. Yet, to go back to my opening anecdote, understanding the character of Sir John Kerr is only marginally helped by knowing that he was the son of a boilermaker. To understand his progress one has also to understand something of the elite habits of the universities, the trade unions, the legal and political networks, the gentlemen's clubs, the police suburbs of Sydney's "North Shore", and the other elite influences through which he has passed.

Connected with this lack of interest in the habits of the elites is the egalitarian view of Australia given world publicity in Jones Bryce's *Modern Democracies* (much of it simply taken from Tocqueville) with refresher boosts now and again, notably in D. H. Lawrence's *Kangaroo*, W. K. Hancock's *Australia* and J. D. Pringle's *Australian Accent*. Such views seize on the surface manners especially very evident in Australia (and in themselves something of a victory) and amplify them into a wider significance than they can bear. The effect of so overestimating the strength of egalitarian democracy is that the ordinary people are blamed for inadequacies that would be seen in other countries as the work of elites. Since I wrote *The Lucky Country* in 1964, I have made this point so often that I would apologize for making it yet again if there were signs that more people had recognized it.

That Australian historians have not thrown up more general speculation about various kinds of elite habits and how they are maintained is particularly remarkable when you consider the obsession so many of them have with political history. In *A New History of Australia* the chapter by G. L. Buxton, on the 1870s and 1880s, throws off the politics obsession altogether—perhaps this is easier in writing about the economic, social and cultural bits, along with emerging themes—women, Aboriginals, minerals, sport (although not the environment); but to some history still equals politics.

In this kind of book it is, of course, useful, and for reaching purposes necessary, to have a record of what are conventionally seen as the political high spots. But I would like to use the book as an excuse for saying that while politics is the central theme of so much writing about Australian history, the historians do not always manage to be very good at writing about politics. In particular, attempts to delineate the political cultures of Australia have been timid and spotty; there is not much concern with trying to portray the "meaning" of political situations to those who were part of them. There are exceptions—notably the grand prospect in Manning Clark's three-volume *History of Australia* of British bourgeois philistinism as a central dynamic in Australian life. But overall, there is not much speculation concerning what, to its participants, Australian politics could really seem to be "about"—what world views and lifestyles have been at peril in Australian political issues.

This is one reason for the thinness of much professional comment on the elevated intensity of last year's election campaign and its continuing aftermath; it can seem un-Australian that Australians were so stirred by political passions. The political victors had a self-interest in sweeping it all away as a "dead issue"; but even a reason commentators supplied commenting was that their view of Australian political history was little more than that of a simple chronicle. It did not allow for a political situation that drew passion from themes central to Australian general culture.

Many Australian historians act as if Bryce was correct when he said that Australia was "the country in which material interests have most dominated politics", or as if, as Bagehot put it in *The English Constitution*, speaking of the "new countries" generally, Australian politics portray the *realisme implitoyable* of the naturalist novel, with an "ostentatious utility" in all the creations of politics. Yet as well as this ostentatious utility there has been great romance.

For example, the centrality of "the home", so well understood and so astutely exploited by the suburban mind of R. G. Menzies. Or the imperial dreams that, having made Australia more British than the British, led Harold Holt to his madness in the rose-garden of the White House when he pledged Australia to go "all the way with LBJ". There has been the itch to show the world that, in the words of the song, "Australia Will Be There". This has been most regularly manifest in the sending of sporting teams or military units, beginning with the Sudan victory of Edward Trickett in 1887 when he won the world championship for sculling by four lengths on the River Thames ("putting the name of New South Wales on every British mouth") and the despatch of a contingent to the Sudan in 1885 ("If our little army fails our honour will be buried beneath the contempt of the world"). But it has also been manifest in a range of other ideals, including ideals of political behaviour, where it can combine with an opposite desire to keep up with what Gough Whitlam, in the days of the second coyenant of his programme, used to call "comparable countries". In those days Whitlam could make both of these contrary appetites—the dream that through native boldness too forward-looking Australia would show the world, and the dream that backward Australia would at least catch up with other countries.

And as a general theme in Australian culture the tension of the rough and the smooth—wildness versus domestication, a few hundred persons unloading their stores beside a creek to the idea of a new people inhabiting a continent. Some of the recent regional histories themselves an encouraging achievement) have also been good at this: they picture the wilderness, then the development of a "society" within it. (More exactly, the replacement of a brown society with a white.)

One of the remarkable ways in which Australians inhabited what they came to see as their continent lay in leaving most of it uninhabited, becoming, by one type of measure, the most urbanized society on earth. Equally remarkably, this whole social scene has been ignored by historians. In *A New History of Australia* there is no sustained attempt (not even five or six consecutive pages) to portray Australia as a suburban civilization: the few mentions the suburbs get are mainly in connection with public works or private building and construction. Even when the suburban nature of Australia does receive treatment, as in Sean Glynn's pamphlet *Urbanisation in Australia, 1788-1900*, it is likely to be treated under hard, "male" headings—the economic, the geographic, the demographic, the political—rather than being about people living in houses. Sean Glynn avoids soft, female crackpottery by going so far as to assert that "Australia—far from being or becoming a nation apart—was really one small part of an international urban, or suburban, culture, created by Western civilization".

The hesitancy about handling a large canvas that can come from the desire to avoid the immature is shown most significantly in Australian historians' failure to write social history. By "social history" I mean something more than the politics-plus-other-bits approach that can suit the purposes of a book such as *A New History of Australia*. I had in mind the ability to transcend divisions such as "politics", "art", "painting", "Aboriginies", and make something wider out of them, or at the very least to see connections between them.

What has been achieved by a few has been the creation of a complex "society". Manning Clark's three-volume *History* might be seen as the last of the great nineteenth-century novels, one of those multi-volume works that created the illusion of a complex society in which "characters" move, their conduct shaped, constrained and limited by the dimensions and difficulties of the society as well as by personal oddities; but in this case the society itself also has character interest, growing in 60 years from a few hundred persons unloading their stores beside a creek to the idea of a new people inhabiting a continent. Some of the recent regional histories themselves an encouraging achievement) have also been good at this: they picture the wilderness, then the development of a "society" within it. (More exactly, the replacement of a brown society with a white.)

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Invitation to a Resurrection

Nobody any more bursts out singing;
Words never douce to song,
Verse which once went soaring, winging,
Shambles and shuffles along.
No poet sings any more,
The Muses have all gone arty;
The free-verse voice is a bore;
The voice of a cocktail party.

Nobody any more speaks the world,
Once uttered, to outlast time;
Jargon and journalese are preferred;
Nobody bothers with rhyme.
But who quotes the poets today,
Those blind mouths loading the blind?
And nothing at all they say
Has power to enchant the mind.

Who in any case wishes to read them?
Do they not bite another's backs?
It is the thought that people don't need them
Makes them such sociable chaps.
"Let's start an anthology, Max,
—with a cultural grant it's easy—
We'll scratch one another's backs
And publish a page for the sleazy.

Let's bury Song in our collegiate coffin,
Abolish rhyme, rhythm and grace;
Let's be avant-garde once too often
And find ourselves out of the race.
It's happened quite often before.
When Young Turks have had their fling
They find they're not young any more.
Since the free-verse voice is a bore,
The voice of a great world-order where,
With anyone who can sing,

A. D. Hope

Ship of state

By D. M. Wilson

RUPERT BRUCE-MITFORD: The Sutton Hoo Ship-Burial
Volume I
792pp. British Museum Publications. £45.

The ship-burial from Sutton Hoo in Suffolk was excavated under the gathering clouds of war in the summer of 1939. It was the richest treasure ever found in English soil, and it is now, thirty-seven years later, being celebrated in luxurious format by the British Museum. Four volumes are planned of which this, the first, deals with the site and its environment and the excavations which have taken place there between 1938 and 1970; it also includes an inventory of the finds, a study of the coins found with the burial and a discussion of the identity of the person buried with, or commemorated by, the deposit. To this is added a note on the Treasure Trove inquest on the find and the publication of the original excavator's diary. Volume 2 will comprise a description and discussion of the arms, armour and jewelry; volume 3, a description and discussion of the other, more domestic objects; and volume 4 will be a volume of interpretation, together with an account of the technical and conservation work carried out by the British Museum's research laboratory.

These volumes—when finally produced—will be the most important individual publication in Anglo-Saxon archaeology to be undertaken since the war. The first volume is exciting, stimulating and full of mest: a monument to Rupert Bruce-Mitford's skill and patience and the trustees' faith in a very long-drawn-out project. When complete, it will stand with the great Norwegian publication Oseberg fundet, Odobescu's *Un trésor de Petrosso* and Chiflet's *Anastasis Childerici I* as one of the great compendia of archaeological material of the post-Roman period.

Scholars have been writing about Sutton Hoo for years. C. W. Phillips, the excavator, together with a number of collaborators, published preliminary descriptions and discussions of the find almost as soon as it was out of the ground and accounts of it were circulating in occupied Europe in the early years of the war. Dr Bruce-Mitford himself has kept up a steady stream of papers on various aspects of the find over thirty years. It is bewildering to realize how often we have been obliged to alter our opinions as objects have changed form. The stag leaves the "standard" and becomes part of a "sceptre"; the helmet sprouts neck guards, the mounts of the shield move around like a carousel, and the "harp" becomes a "lyre". The academic community has also swallowed a redating to 625-40 from c 650-60, a revision of the ship's lines, the presence or absence of a body and numerous theories about the Christian content of the burial and the identity of the person in whose honour this treasure was laid down.

Now at last the material is being properly presented and it is dreadful to think of the series of revisions, parallels, underlinings, exclamations and denials which will undoubtedly follow this publication. I myself will do battle on a number of points and I am sure that no self-respecting Anglo-Saxonist will be able to resist the challenge of this fascinating material now displayed for the first time to a professional audience.

Some general remarks of criticism are in order. The book is difficult to use, partly because of its physical size—it weighs eleven pounds. It would have been much easier to handle, and the pictures more easily referred to, had it been published in two volumes, one of text and one with illustrations. This is indicative of a lack of editorial control, which is also evident in many minor inconsistencies and in rather too much elaboration (particularly in the minutiae of scientific reports). The volume has a most perverse series of "bibliographies" (in reality, lists of sources). A "general bibliography" is accompanied by a totally unnecessary series of "classified bibliographies" of five of the chapters. But all the entries in the latter also appear in the first, so eight pages are wasted and the reader is never sure which reference he is chasing. I hope this will not be treated as a precedent for the next volume.

The general disorganization in the make-up of the book is exemplified by the lack of logic of a chapter entitled "Observations on the burial-deposit" which consists of two parts: a discussion of the textiles in the deposit, followed by a series of general comments concerning the whole deposit. The coins are described, catalogued and illustrated after they have been discussed, which is rather a topsy-turvy way of looking at them, proceeding from the unknown to the known. There is a constant obsession with Swedish parallels which sometimes goes to absurd lengths: to use, for example, a classical plaque from Greve four as an indication of a Swedish connection just because a pseudo-cameo occurs at Old Uppsala is carrying an insubstantial argument to extremes.

But much of the book deserves praise. I would particularly single out the patient work which has gone into the collation of the 1939 excavation plans. This important piece of source criticism has resulted in the triumphant production of new and justified plans of the buried deposit and of the ship-burial. The re-excavation of the ship in the late 1960s, together with work on the original records, has added greatly to our knowledge of the burial, not only because of the objects found in the re-excavation of the spoil-heaps but also through the interpretation of the traces of wood found in the vicinity of the burial chamber.

The hundred pages devoted to the ship, written largely by A. C. Evans, form the core of the volume. They are detailed, clear and concise, and include a careful comparison with other ships found in north-western Europe. Apart from a slightly specious and hesitant attempt to put a sail in the Sutton Hoo ship, we have here a firm statement of current ideas about ship-building in Anglo-Saxon England. The ship was 27.1 metres long, and was rowed by forty oarsmen; it was almost certainly not a sailing ship; it was clinker-built, of nine strakes a side, with no keel and a fixed steering position on the starboard side. The examination of the Sutton Hoo ship, together with the recently discovered vessel from the Graveney marshes in Kent, adds immeasurably to our knowledge of ship-building in the north. Here is a vessel longer than any found in Scandinavian contexts of the Viking age, preserved only by the concretions of rotted wood in the soft sand of the burial mound, but preserved in great detail. It was a fitting receptacle for the body of the East Anglian king who was buried here between 625 and 640, with treasures of gold and silver which amaze us by their quality and quantity.

It is impossible for the Anglo-Saxonist not to remember the words of the poet of *Beowulf* who describes the funeral of the Danish king, Scyld:

They provided him with no lesser
gifts,
With treasure of the people, than
did those
Who at his beginning sent him out
Alone over the waves, while yet a
child.

Sutton Hoo more than any other English burial brings to life the mood and background of the poet of this great epic.

J. N. Westwood's *Fighting Ships of World War II* (160pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £4.50) attempts to provide documentation on typical ships of the navies engaged in the war, except that of the Soviet Union. The book provides detail of design features, histories of individual ships, and statistical tables on each class of ship. The illustrations are an important part of the book; most of them are action photographs.

Catch a rising star

By Gavin Lambert

DAVID DAHL and BARRY KEHOE :
Young Judy
250pp. Hart-Davis, MacGibbon. £4.95.

ROBERT WINDELER :
Shirley Temple
160pp. W. H. Allen. £3.50.

When Judy Garland was still Frances Gumm and only two years old, a family friend commented that "she just loves to be up there". "Up there" was the stage of a movie theatre in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where vaudeville acts preceded the silent picture; Frank Gumm managed the theatre, his wife Ethel played the piano and encouraged her two older daughters to form a singing team. Almost as soon as she joined it, the little girl took over; her voice developed a precocious range and power, she herself an exuberance that brought down the house.

In the late 1920s the Gumm family joined the great migration to Los Angeles; Frank took over a movie theatre in an outlying suburb and Ethel devoted most of her time to driving into the city and getting her children booked as performers. The Gumm sisters became the Garland sisters. Frances became Judy, and at thirteen was auditioned at MGM. Louis B. Mayer placed her under contract and launched her in *The Wizard of Oz*. Her father, to whom she always felt particularly close, died before the movie appeared and Judy later spoke of his death as "the most terrible thing that ever happened to me". It began an estrangement from her mother that never healed and, according to the authors of *Young Judy*, scaled her future. In *The Wizard of Oz* she projected a fervent image of innocent childhood just at the moment when childhood and innocence had been irretrievably lost. Until then she had associated being "up there" with happiness, family approval and the security of applause. Now she was on her own, a studio property paid to give pleasure.

Although they did not, apparently, interview the star's surviving sister, the authors have researched the Gumm family background in close, often fascinating, detail. They give a convincingly strange portrait of a childhood normal on the surface, filled with precarious hidden tensions. Aware of these tensions without knowing the reason for them, Judy could only sense that after one of her performances, everything seemed better. The main problem was Frank Gumm's bisexuality. The book tells us only that he liked teenage boys, but does not indicate whether he was tempted to form an alternative relationship, or was satisfied by occasional compulsive release. He seems to have avoided open scandal, but was the subject of considerable underground gossip. Ethel's reaction was to centre her life on her children, particularly on Judy. She became the classic stage mother, obsessed and ruthless, although the book insists that she was a confused, driven woman who never understood her own motives. This is probably true, but it is also true that she never understood her child. Unconsciously, at least, she exploited her, and Garland's later bitterness toward her mother is less surprising than the authors seem to think.

David Dahl and Barry Kehoe are young social workers, and the problem with their book is its case-history approach, always a limitation when the subject is also an artist. They shrewdly establish that family tensions created Garland's urgent, insatiable desire to please; and that family happiness explains her love of vaudeville, the place where she always felt most at home and to which she returned after the collapse of her movie career. But the decisive tragic element in her life was the lack of someone to sustain her after *The Wizard of Oz* made her a star. Abandoned to success, she became its victim, more addicted to it than to any of the drugs she also took. The manic energy, in her case as in her mother's, was self-generating and self-consuming, because her motors ran on constant anxiety.

Her finest film, *A Star is Born*, was in many ways autobiographical, for its cliché situation of the rising actress in love with a falling alcoholic star was a paraphrase of her life. Again like her mother, she was always involved with men weaker than herself. (She once described Ethel as "a lonely and determined woman", and could then she herself was repeating the pattern.) In *A Star is Born* her two most remarkable numbers, "Born in a Trunk" and "The Man Who Got Away", were the pillars on which she built the myth of her adult life: the child fated to a glittering but solitary showbiz life, and romantic disappointment. "To know oneself is to foresee oneself and to foresee oneself amounts to playing a part" (Valéry). It is impossible not to believe that Garland foresaw her part to the end, when she collapsed on a lavatory seat at the age of forty-seven from an overdose of life. The remarkable thing is that she played it with such intensity and acid humour, aware that she had nowhere to go but determined to make the journey unforgettable. No one could have been more "up there" than she was at her own funeral, with an audience of 21,000 filing past the open bier in which she lay dressed in her fifth wedding dress.

Shirley Temple is a less ambitious book, a straightforward compilation of biographical facts from which the outlines of a character emerge; and the contrast between it and Judy Garland's character is fascinating. Shirley Temple became a star at the age of six and found it no problem, mainly because her talent was never particularly important to her. Realising that she was not going to succeed as an adult actress, she changed direction. She was not ambitious, but unlike Garland she had an instinct for respectability. The failure of an early first marriage seems not to have upset her any more seriously than the end of her first career, and she retrieved both situations. The tap-dancing skill that amazed Bill Robinson metamorphosed into a diplomatic technique that impressed Henry Kissinger, and she is now the American ambassador to Ghana and the confident, maternal wife of a successful business executive. Although a Republican, she dissociates herself from the more right-wing film actors, Ronald Reagan and George Murphy, who also graduated to politics: "I'm a fiscal conservative, liberal to moderate on domestic issues, and very liberal international." She describes Eleanor Roosevelt, whom she first met as the set of *Little Miss Broadway* in 1937, as an "inspiration". She sees little connection between Shirley Temple Black and the child movie star, yet in a way her roles still dominate her, as they dominated Garland. She was always playing little Miss Fix-It, solving situations and marriages, working for a tidy, efficient world. Today she has created that world for herself and talks in sincere, simplistic terms about serving her country, which she defines as encouraging "US business interests" and "maternal child care". She also foresaw her part, and knew it by well this side of the rainbow.

Left, Frank Gumm in the early 1930s. Right, Frances at two and a half. Pictures from Young Judy, *by David Dahl and Barry Kehoe.*

Proprietary brand-image

By Phillip Knightley

SIMON REGAN :
Rupert Murdoch
A Business Biography
246pp. Angus and Robertson. £3.80.

Rupert Murdoch is the most successful newspaper proprietor in Britain and among the top five in the world. Last year when the rest of the industry was struggling to survive under the joint impact of the economic recession and the soaring price of newsprint, Mr Murdoch's News International, which owns, among others, the newspapers The Sun and the *News of the World*, made a massive £13m profit, double that of the previous year. His parent company, Cruden Investments, controls newspapers and television stations in Australia and newspapers in the United States and Britain, and is looking for more. When other circulations decline, Mr Murdoch's goes up. When everyone else contracts, Mr Murdoch expands. How does he do it?

The author of this book, Simon Regan, who resigned himself as a journalist who wrote "a thousand scurrilous scandals" for the *News of the World*—sets out to tell us, but does not make a very good job of it. To begin with there are several minor but irritating errors. (Australian time is ahead, not behind, Britain's. Parramatta is west of Sydney, not north. There is no such newspaper as the *Sydney Morning Telegraph*.) One can forgive Mr Regan an Englishmen's for these mistakes, but not his Australian publishers.

Next, Mr Regan's rather florid style tends to get in the way of his narrative. A Murdoch executive has teeth so bright that "one gets the feeling he cleans them with razor blades". Mr Regan goes on: "He has extraordinary eyes which give a hotness to them around the edges, while at the same time [illegible] the pupils." Mr Murdoch moves into the United States and in no time, Mr Regan tells us, "his muscles are flexed and he has his teeth bitten hard on America's newspaper collarbone".

That said, Mr Regan has a lot of fascinating material on Mr Murdoch's Australian background. He tells us of Mr Murdoch's legendary father, Sir Keith Murdoch, a war correspondent at Gallipoli and a newspaper proprietor in the baronial style, more common in Australia than the British reader might imagine. He describes—but not in as much detail as one would like—how young Rupert, fresh from Oxford, was ousted from his father's paper, *The Herald* of Melbourne, by some sort of colonels' coup, and how he went into exile in Adelaide.

From there, using the *Adelaide News* as a power base, he expanded into Western Australia and finally into the Australian big-time, Sydney. This is the best part of the book. Sydney newspaper proprietors have a long tradition of megalomania, horse-whipping, fire-raising, punch-ups, and fates on the bar-room floor. One suspects that Mr Murdoch's lessons learnt in dominating the tough and ruthless Sydney world in Australia more than qualified him to handle the over-confident opposition he met in Fleet Street and the City.

Mr Regan is less successful in describing how Mr Murdoch established himself in Britain by outbidding Robert Maxwell, of Pergamon Press, who at that stage of his career appeared unstoppable, for the *News of the World*. The hasting was on Maxwell but the "boy publisher from Down Under" came out on top. The way he did it, the City complained, was not exactly cricket, and the Take-Over Panel had this in mind when it changed the take-over rules soon afterwards.

But Mr Murdoch was in, and now nothing could stop him. He bought the dying *Sun* and turned it into a newspaper [illegible] the newspaper that once sold more than five million copies a day. He moved into the United States, bought some papers there, and started a new tabloid, the weekly *National Star*, which looks like being even more successful than *The Sun*.

Mr Regan gives us a series of what he calls pen portraits of Mr Murdoch during this period, "his habits and complexes, his friends, his way of life, his enemies, and the environment he dominates". But added up they are not really satisfactory; Mr Murdoch end what makes him run remains something of an enigma, and the reader is left with more questions than answers.

What, for example, are Mr Murdoch's politics? This would be of particular interest in Australia, where the part Mr Murdoch and his newspapers played in the recent general election is the subject of much bitter debate. Why has he "held back" a definitive biography of his father? What role does he believe newspapers should play in our society? If the last question appears naive it is because Mr Regan leaves the reader with the impression that the Murdoch newspapers are the way they are because of financial pressure, and that Mr Murdoch would really like to produce something entirely different. Mr Regan quotes Douglas Brass, a former top executive in the Murdoch empire until—like many others—he fell out with Mr Murdoch and had to go, as saying of his former boss: "He was a great idealist once [but] he felt survival in the industry was popularization." Or, as Mr Regan succinctly puts the theory: "He plonked bare boobs and legs reading as far as he can."

Is this what newspapers are really all about? Is Porn King Dies for Love, Wives Sell Sex for Food, "Just a Naked Rug as Twilight", Nude Girl Had Silent Watcher, Mr Regan, who sees Fleet Street as a series of [illegible] pages, [illegible] the newspaper that [illegible] the mystery [illegible]

The old home acre

By Eric Korn

ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER :
Passions
312pp. Cape. £3.95.

Reading about Benjamin Schwertz who literally lays his life on the line for a girl, and lives to regret it, or about Haim Leib Bordeles with an organ that is his bewitched sexual organ, one is aware of a moderately rare sensation: an urgent desire to know what happens next. There are literary rhythms to whom arousing a reader's interest is an improper lever: Singer compounds the felony by going on and telling you what happens next. Worse still, his narration has such authority—if he writes like an angel it is the Recording Angel—that the happening is as inevitable as the growth of a tree, no matter how bizarre its shape.

He is a master of endings: the expected without hollow, or the unexpected without trickiness. The surprise is often in a single phrase that shifts the moral value of what has gone before, wrenching the mood from tension to wry resignation, from uproar to solemnity, or back. The Warsaw express missed Benjamin Schwertz, mentioned above, and he marries Heyele Minz:

"Is he still a fatalist?"
"He still is."
"Would he do it again?" I asked. . . .
"Not for Heyele."

In contrast, "The New Year Party" begins with a description of a fearful gathering of most-happy Yiddish literary frauds and backbiters: "I don't let anyone slander you in front of me. And what don't they say. That you're a soob, a cynic, a misanthrope, a recluse. But I, Peretz Lalpziger, defend you like a lioness." These creatures surround drunken, bullying Boris and his subservient chauffeur-cheekeeper, Harry. But Boris dies, forgetting to make any provision for Harry, and the faithful servant has charged himself with Boris's memorial. He wants to inscribe it "Dear Boris, be healthy and happy wherever you are", but the engraver accepts blasphemy—can the dead be healthy?—and the narrator is called in to arbitrate. Suddenly the story turns into an account of Harry's passionate self-effacement: the narrator is overwhelmed by the nobility of his uncomplaining friendship, though the reader is left free not to share his admiration.

The theme of emotional extremism recurs in the title story. Zalman the dealer, Meyer Eunuch and friends are topping each other's stories. One tells of Leib Belkes who built a temple out of matches and walked to the Holy Land, the next of Jonathan the tailor who became a Talmudic scholar on a bet, the last of Rabbi Mendel who celebrated the fast of Yom Kippur for two and a half years, breaking only on the Sabbath: "Everything can become a passion, even serving God." In "Errors" the same group discuss celebrated mistakes, like that of Reb Meshulam of Szczebrzesyn (*sic!*) who misspelt a Hebrew word and let in a host of demons. But Meyer concludes that there are no such things as errors: "How can there be errors if everything comes from divine sources? There are spheres where all errors are transformed into truth." This gift of transforming error in truth, of finding sense in craziness, enables Singer to face horrors without flinching and hilarity without corpsing.

In this collection he continues to do what he does so well, digging deeper the old home acre, the Polish shtetl before the holocaust, and its survivors and escapees in America, in both places a rich population of fanatics, scribes and holy fools, to say nothing of dybbuks, demons, and sorcerers. They are "a minority of a minority", in whom the Hasidic tradition lives, to whom Hitler causes are a bore and Israel an irrelevance. The Final Solution is not something they have been moved to neurosis by reading about, but a pervasive presence that needs only sidelong reference—"the war made a quick mess of the family".

As the Jewishness of his stories only rarely degenerates into local colour, so the occult element never becomes spookiness. He might count as the greatest ghost-story writer of the century if it were not that his stories are in no way representative of a genre. His spirits, though fearsome, are not uncanny. There are no ghosts, for "in literature, as in our dreams, death does not exist". But there are the revenants, the possessed: Hanka, who blights a literary tour of Argentina; the amazing lady epileptic in "The Admirer", a piece of Marx Brothers knockabout; the sexually rapacious and destructive vampires in "A Tale of Two Sisters" and "The Witch". We recognize the demon here: it is the cheder-boy's adolescent terror, the aboriginal Momma who survived to haunt Lenny Bruce and Portnoy, in all her transylvanian splendour. But Singer's supernatural makes no more demands on our metaphysic than this: "If people could only see how many devils and imps hover about them, they would all perish from fright."

In "Sabbath in Portugal" the narrator is shown a rabbinic manuscript:

"Do you understand this?"
"I'm afraid I understand nothing else."

His universality is rooted in his own kind, to whom, with resignation, without extenuation, he returns:

Their wives, with dyed hair and heavily made up faces, smoked cigarettes, dealt cards, laughed and chattered all at once. . . . The men were studying the financial pages of the *International Herald Tribune*. Yes, those are my people, I said to myself. If the Messiah is to come, he will have to come to them because there are no others.

Copping it

By David Wilson

JOSEPH WAMBAUGH :
The Choirboys
346pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £3.95.

The choirboys are cops, and they work late duty in some of the seamier precincts of downtown Los Angeles. In a typical night's work they may happen on a multiple murder or a grisly suicide; be called upon to pacify junior-league hoodlums who sniff glue and have had felony records since they were in short trousers; or to subdue a legless alcoholic who screams obscenities at passers-by and is known to bite arresting officers; come up against the misfit who sleeps in furniture stores or the eccentric who paints people red. And there is always the chance of being seconded to the vice squad, whose sergeant fires a water pistol at perverts foolish enough to enact their private fantasies in public lavatories.

Joseph Wambaugh's cops are the real McCoy: two years ago he was himself a Los Angeles policeman, but the success of his off-duty writing (he is the author of *The New Centurions* and *The Onion Field*) persuaded him to turn in his badge. This new chronicle of life on the force is, he claims, "the truest novel I've ever written": every major incident—and there are many—is evidently founded on fact.

The trouble is that this relentless catalogue of incident, by turns bizarre and boring, is housed in a narrative built brick by brick with each character waiting in the wings for the night his number comes up. When Mr Wambaugh calls "this incredibly gritty intimate world of the radio car" (his prolix style readily accommodates such descriptive phrases) unfortunately allows him to bring on his patrolmen in pairs. The linking thread is their off-duty relaxation, a regular get-together ("choir practice") in one of the city's parks, where they get drunk, enjoy the favours of two oversized bar girls and colourfully complain about the horrors of being a cop in a world without pity.

They are a mixed bunch, ranging from the near-psychotic Vietnam veteran who wears lead-lined gloves to the sensitive graduate in classical literature whose suicide (in the vernacular he "eats his gun") precipitates an incident in the park which ends with the dismissal of one of his colleagues. What they share is an endlessly rehearsed obsession with the emotional hazards of policing a city seemingly inhabited exclusively by the scum of the earth. Mr Wambaugh feels for his ordinary cops (and mercilessly pillories their desk-bound superiors): but so insistently that he manages long before the end to lose the very sympathy he wants to enlist on their behalf.

Brotherly love

By Sylvia Clayton

CAROLYN SLAUGHTER :
The Story of the Weasel
256pp. Hart-Davis, MacGibbon. £3.25.

BARBARA GOULDEN :
Goodbye to Yesterday
219pp. Heinemann. £3.50.

Carolyn Slaughter, in a very assured first novel, describes the growth of an incestuous relationship between Catherine and her brother Christopher, children of an unhappy Victorian household. Catherine, who has a loyally obstinate nature, thinks of herself as a mole end of her secretive, independent brother as a weasel. Together they share a private world in which their drunken, sometimes violent, father, their capricious mother and their surly elder brother have no part. The intensity and sensuality of their [illegible] makes the novel seem chilly and contrived. Catherine's unhappiness is understood, but it is remote and leaves one unmoved.

Barbara Goulden's sixty-ninth novel, set at a slightly later date, is romantic fiction in the vein of *Upstairs, Downstairs*: "Nothing won't ever be the same now the old Queen's gone, God rest her soul", observes the faithful housekeeper to her husband. The Elliot family prove her right. Pretty, wilful Tiffany takes a teaching job and goes to live in sin with a historian; they quarrel because he loses himself in the seventeenth century and forgets to wash up. Her brother Bill becomes involved with a penniless divorcee; Daley, the housemaid, is seduced by the milkman. But in the words of Noele, a friend of the family: "It's no use lamenting the past, the thing to do is to make the most of the present."

In Jean Potts's novel *My Brother's Killer* (176pp. Collancz. £3.25), an underdog younger brother plans to be revenged on his older brother who never meant him any harm but always seemed to do so. A lifetime of forced sends in a sour death. The brownstone apartment house in New York and its inhabitants are well-realized but dismal.

A full-time condition

By Michael Irwin

CHAIM POTOK :
In the Beginning
454pp. Heinemann. £4.50.

In *the Beginning* relates the changing fortunes and attitudes of the Lurie, a Jewish family living in the Bronx. In particular it is the story of David, the narrator, and of the shaping of his character and vocation by the influences among which he grows up. His earliest recollections go back to the late 1920s when Max, his father, who had fought with Pilsudski's army against the Cossacks and had later organized resistance to the Polish pogroms, was prospering in real estate and able to assist friends and relatives to leave Europe for the safety of the United States. The Depression brings poverty and near-despair; but after a period of demoralization Max learns a new trade and begins to restore the family fortunes. Meanwhile David, shocked by newspaper pictures of liberated prison camps "a red haze" blurs his vision: "I needed to enter the photographs of Bergen Belsen and I could not do it." To achieve his aim he scrambles down a dangerous bluff where one of his schoolmates had died. He reaches the bottom bruised and bleeding. One can see what Mr Potok is about: hero and still feel that such a passage has an awkward flavour of self-dramatization, of officiousness in grief.

In E. G. Perrault's *Spoil I* (253pp. Collins. £3.50), mining engineer Ian Donaldock, trying to bring in an oil well in the Canadian Arctic, has to contend not only with impossible natural conditions, but also with isolated directors, unscrupulous competitors, powerful politicians, Eskimo labour, ecology freaks and a sexually starved wife.

Snakes and ladders

By Edward Playfair

ANTHONY WAGNER:
Pedigree and Progress
Essays in the Genealogical Interpretation of History
333pp. Chichester: Phillimore. £8.75 until June 30, thereafter £10.50.

In 1960 Sir Anthony Wagner wrote *English Genealogy*, an exceptionally well ordered and valuable book on all aspects of his subject, and in 1972 he produced a revised edition. *Pedigree and Progress* carries on some of his favourite themes in greater detail. Three of the essays have already been delivered as lectures; the others are apparently now published for the first time.

Sir Anthony has always been a champion of the utility to historians of heraldry and genealogy; and his position as Garter does not persuade him to put the former in front of the latter. Yet the case is hard to make beyond a certain point if judged by cost-effectiveness. The initial stage is plain fact-finding. There are those who need to know that Euphrosyne, daughter to Mstislav I of Kiev, married the King of Hungary. To everyone else the fact is insignificant. When one advances towards generalization, the material is rather intractable. The early records are skewed by rank. In later days they are intolerably voluminous and the difficulty of extracting genealogical order increases exponentially with the mass of raw data to be covered. Large-scale chiometrics are not on: selection is needed, and there is always a danger of introducing bias. On the other hand, a limited number of genealogical examples, which may be inadequate to found a general theory, may be enough to disprove one.

These essays, therefore, tend to fall into three classes: fact-finding and even to cut out the bottom rungs of the ladders, though to a dispassionate man the first steps upwards are the most respectable. Sir Anthony (descendant of eighteenth-century court hatters, as he points out with discreet pride) illustrates his theme with great skill, both vertically and horizontally: links of marriage and consanguinity can often show at several removes some surprising connections.

In the third class Sir Anthony provides an interesting study of masters and fellows of Eton, a strongly intermarrying caste of men climbing up the ladder. In the bad old days, before the reforms of the mid-nineteenth century, scholarships were given by nomination, with no demand merit about it. Once you had been given an Eton scholarship, you were modestly settled for life. You automatically got a scholarship, a degree without examination and a fellowship at King's; then, if you wanted to marry, you could become a master at Eton or you could get a college living from either institution. Nominees were very apt to be the sons of college servants at Eton or of Windsor tradesmen: pure favour. But as soon as competitive examinations starved that source of talent disappeared, since an expensive schooling at a preparatory school was needed. Mark the case of the Sumner family, who got under the wire before the reforms. There were three generations of Windsor tailors, two generations who started as choristers of Eton and rose to be (among other things) headmasters of Eton and Harrow, and after that glory—an archbishop, bishops and the late Warden of All Souls. Was ever a good turn to local tradesmen better justified?

The text of the essays is interesting and stimulating, but is not beyond reproach. It is ill-ordered, and four of the seven essays carry postscripts at their tails. The standard of proofreading is atrocious. There is an errata slip, but it is obscure and far from exhaustive. Poets are misquoted; misprints abound; place-names and personal names are misspelt. This would be hard to take in a work of pure scholarship, but *Pedigree and Progress* is either more or less than that, according to your point of view, and perhaps it does not matter. It addresses a fairly wide audience, though social historians are clearly at its centre. They must judge the book for themselves, but they will lose a good deal if they put up a notice saying "Trespassers will be ignored". There is a good deal of enrichment in the essays; they are redolent of Sir Anthony's own beliefs, particularly in the introduction and the lectures, which is fair enough. "I am", he says, "as Ruskin called himself, a Tory of the school of Homer and Walter Scott—but not unincurred with the Socialism of William Morris." All this makes for excellent reading, on the basis of the author's do-it-yourself sociology and willingness to leave his specialty and enter the historical jousts armed with those secondary texts which he finds most attractive.

The ninety-three genealogical tables which conclude the book are much less open to criticism and have great intrinsic merit. Most of them relate to English genealogy, where Sir Anthony is fully at home. Others, which illustrate the broken genealogical bridge between ancient and modern times, stray over the dark ages in Europe and nearer Asia. No one could cover the whole of this field by personal expertise, and the scholarly strategy of the tables depends on that of the authorities which the compiler follows: but the elegant arrangement lo his. The design throughout is masterly and the proofreading far better than that of the text: both certainly reflect Sir Anthony's detailed attention. Selection was needed to keep the tables within bounds; it has been judiciously done, and I have only one small criticism to make: be omits from the table of the Dunfield family the not undistinguished and certainly relevant author of *The Tunnellers of Holwinden*. This act of pedigreeism is a joy to the eye and the mind, and will serve to illustrate more books than the present one.

Realers of the *TLS* will sate with interest and sympathy the pedigree of the late John Carter, whose family connection with Eton, down to his own fellowship, went back for almost two centuries.

The armorial bearings of the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers, drawn by G. Mussatt; from Robin Dennys's study of the sources of imagery for heasts and monsters in medieval armory, The Heraldic Imagination *(224pp. Barrie and Jenkins. £10).*

Liberty belle

By Roger Fulford

THEA HOLME:
Prinny's Daughter
A Biography of Princess Charlotte of Wales
264pp. Hamish Hamilton. £6.50.

The story of the brief, disordered and turbulent life of Princess Charlotte has been often told. There is therefore a long shelf of books about her pin which Thea Holme's biography moves to the first place. The reason for this is not only that she tells her story with sparkle but that she has been able to weave into it the material from the Royal Archives published by A. Aspinall. This included three volumes of George IV's letters published by the Cambridge University Press in 1938 and eight volumes of the same prolific writer's correspondence with Lady Hatherton published by Gaskell from 1963 onwards. The same editor published the princess's letters to Miss Mercer Elphinstone in 1949. Thea Holme's book is in fact a rich distillation of Professor Aspinall. She will not object to two words of caution. The Prince of Wales's "mistress" Lady Jersey was never attractive and "the gold and silver dicky bird" at Creevey was not she but her daughter-in-law. And, after the publication of Owen Hedley's life of Queen Charlotte, it is no longer possible to credit the Princess of Wales's gothic tales about her sister-in-law Princess Sophia.

Few children, commoners or royal, can have had a more difficult domestic background than the princess: not only did she come from a broken home but so far as she was concerned her mother and father were not so much parents as hereditary. The Regent, who was primarily interested in his own private circle of friends, in fashionable life and in public affairs, could never have made a comfortable father to any child, and the Princess of Wales deserved the comment of her own mother, who, tapping her forehead, said, "Poor thing, she is not right here". When the latter became excessively friendly with some Italian musicians known deceitfully as "the Squallinis", her daughter wrote, "it is a distressing thing to entertain suspicions". In consequence of her parents' independent lives, Princess Charlotte was largely brought up by her grandmother and spinster aunts at Windsor—"the old girls" as she called them. High-spirited and without inhibitions, she was a difficult novice for what one of the old girls called "The Nursery".

Had her character made her docile and obedient, and had that character been more in keeping with her cousin Queen Victoria before her accession, she would have escaped the interesting troubles that she had headstrong and this coupled with her warm, warm ways magnified all the difficulties by which she was faced. She was unquestionably unruly, and obeyed with obvious reluctance the rules made by her father for seeing her mother.

When she became engaged to the Prince of Orange she said that if she had to live in Holland "we must see what we can do to make it more *Londonish* and *dandyish*". Having been engaged to the prince for a few months she broke it off with the lame excuse that she wished to be in England to be with her mother. Her father pointed out to her that for all her grumbling she had more liberty to do as she pleased with her own time "than any girl had".

Her correspondence with her great friend Mercer Elphinstone is fascinating. This friend was eight years older than the princess; she was correctly described by Prince Leopold (the princess's eventual husband) as "that sour and determined character". In these letters of the Princess everything comes out—comments on her family and courtiers, on her wrongs and above all on her marital ambitions, including the assurance of Sir Henry Halford ("the little doctor") that the Prince of Orange was, as is said of animals, entire. Much is written in phonetic spelling—Accadamition is typical—and all pours out with the natural force of a waterfall.

She was certainly strongly sexed; mischievously encouraged by her mother, she had a flirtation when she was in her mid-teens. She wrote to the young man (Lieutenant Hasse) a number of foolish letters, and, when all was over, was left in a fever of anxiety lest he should misuse them. But much more serious, and the real reason for her rejection of the Prince of Orange, was her infatuation for a Prussian Prince Frederick Augustus, son of Frederick the Great's youngest brother and known in the correspondence as "F".

He was thirty-five and an unentanglement Hohenzollern because his mother was his father's niece; he was a philanderer of European renown for those women who could endure the arms which encumbered him. The Duchess of York remarked that she had to move away from him for fear of being sick in public at the opera. So infatuated was the princess with this agreeable man that when her father imposed severe restraints on her liberty she bolted in a hackney carriage to her mother's house. There she met several of the Opposition leaders, but they and indeed her mother advised surrender to her father. After this extraordinary escapade her father and family were not too severe and encouraged her marriage to Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg. Thirty years after that death wrote to Queen Victoria that his wife's "devotion [to him] was quite affecting, from a character so much pushed to be selfish and imperious".

One small contrast remains to be noticed. She was, as Prince Leopold noticed, imperious and inclined to a very inflated view of birth and rank. Of her governess the Duchess of Leeds she asked Mercer Elphinstone, "What can be expected of a low *woman* who has been *pushed up* and *never* found her level?" (She was a Miss Anguish before her marriage and her father was a perfectly respectable master in Chancery.)

Yet the princess allowed no trace of such prejudices to appear in public. At a time when bowing was the greeting on formal occasions the Tsar's sister was surprised to notice that the princess merely put up to any man young or old and "shook hands with all her strength and she seems to have plenty to spare". And Thea Holme gives an entrancing picture of the princess visiting a naval ship—the Leviathan off Weymouth. She refused to be hauled up by a carrying chair and climbed up by rope-ladder, insisting that she should be taken to every part of the ship. When the officers were presented to her she gave each a hearty mannish handshake. When it is remembered how much she was on her own with governesses and ladies-in-waiting, who were not of her own choosing, it is surprising that she managed so well. All who enjoy a biography which shows us character rather than a stodgy recital of events will applaud the writer for the endearing and convincing personality drawn for us in *Prinny's Daughter*.

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Intimate war games

By Liam Hudson

AUSTIN E. QUIGLEY:
The Pinter Problem
294pp. Princeton University Press. £7.90.

Austin E. Quigley suggests in *The Pinter Problem* that his fellow critics have failed to grasp the point of Harold Pinter's plays; and that the answer to this "problem" lies in a proper understanding of recent advances in linguistics. Comprehending with the problems of the self in its relation to others". Of the character Rose, he says that she is "trapped in a world of unsatisfactory choices where compromise and contest are inescapable", and that she is doomed to battle her way through relationships that "she can neither make do with nor do without". He has something closely analogous to say about *The Caretaker*: "The coercive force of interrelational dialogue that puts so much strain on a character's self-image is not evaded by a decision not to talk. To be a combatant in verbal warfare is not to be free but to be another kind of captive." And even when a relationship between Pinter's characters seems to grow, as in *Landscape*, "development on one level leads only to awareness of circularity on another. The relationship lives lo desperate movements from past to present, from memory to fantasy, from hope to despair."

Professor Quigley supports these observations with liberal reference to linguistics and linguistic philosophy. Five of Helliday's works are cited as of theoretical relevance; so are three of Lyons's, and three of Wittgenstein's (including, somewhat tangentially I would have thought, the *Tractatus*). But despite this reliance on linguistics, the drift of his remarks is relentlessly psychological; and this function of language he stresses is not so much "interrelational"—a term so slack as to be virtually meaningless—as it is negotiative and political. This vision of our sentences as negotiative instruments in battles of existential survival is a persuasive one, and pertinent to Pinter's plays; but it is an extraneous complement to the linguistic theorizing that Professor Quigley has in mind, rather than an application of it. On the other hand, this emphasis on broken patterns of communication does have a precedent in the work of psychiatrists, psychologists and sociologists like R. D. Laing, Eric Berne and Erving Goffman; the first of these especially. In fact, it is just such battles, and such discontinuities, that a book like Laing and Esterson's *Sanity, Madness and the Family* is all about. But Professor Quigley does not mention Goffman or Berne, and he refers to Laing only in passing and at second hand.

In fact, he seems to be drawing on the wrong literature; and one cannot help suspecting that he has borrowed the authority of linguistics and linguistic philosophy for the impression of analytical rigour they give, rather than because they have any logical bearing on the critical task in hand. And in his efforts to muster support in this rather dubious way, he is forced into some strange contortions. He cites for example the meeting in *The Birthday Party* between Stanley and his two visitors, Goldberg and McCann:

McCANN: You're a traitor to the cloth.
GOLDBERG: What do you use for pyjamas?
STANLEY: Nothing.
GOLDBERG: You terminate the short of your birth.
McCANN: What about the Albigensian Heresy?
GOLDBERG: Who watered the wicket in Melbourne?
McCANN: What about the Bleosed Oliver Plunkett?
GOLDBERG: Speak up Webber. Why did the chicken cross the road?
STANLEY: He wanted to—he wanted to—he wanted to. . . .

Soon Stanley screams. Professor Quigley's comment is that "language that would appear random and inconsistent from the perspective of a referential approach is simply controlled diversity from the perspective of the interrelational function". He should be required, one feels, to stop chewing in such a noisome way on straw men and abstractions.

If for a moment we do the unthinkable, and strip Wittgenstein of his haloguesphers' shrouds, what did his rejection of the reference theory ontomat to? His injunction about the sentence as an instrument, though influential over philosophers in the 1950s, proves flimsy if you examine it with any care. As a point to make against philosophers who still held the reference theory lo its naive form, it was telling enough. But beyond the ruins of professional philosophy, who would hold such a ridiculous view of language in the first place?

In each academic field, it seems that we take a perverse pleasure in saddling ourselves with crass and oversimplified notions, and then creating the illusion of progress for ourselves by struggling back towards points of view that are less crass. What we end up with, as in Professor Quigley's case, are approximations to common sense. But ho would have been better served, I cannot help feeling, leaving the philosophers and linguists to fight among themselves. Granted that Harold Pinter is a playwright committed to exploring the use that lonely and desperate people make of language, almost in the spirit of a man expounding a brand of algebra, the theories of philosophers or linguists are not going to sharpen an exegesis of his works. They will not tell us whether Pinter's exposition is accurate, nor whether it will last. They are too schematic; and directed in any case to disputes of a different kind. (One might as well turn to Isaac Newton's physics in search of improvements to the design of a carburettor or of a sausage skin.)

Pinter's preoccupation with loneliness and despair, it is worth remembering, was one expressed with vigour in a number of ways during the late 1950s and early 1960s (*The Caretaker*, Pinter's first success, was performed in 1960, and Laing's remarkable *The Divided Self* came out in the same year). But a number of works that captured this mood or capitalized on it, like *Waiting for Godot* for instance, and which we are judged searching at the time, now seem to be losing a little of their grip on our imaginations. Fifteen years ago, to comparison, Noël Coward was assumed beyond the pale; but now, sneakingly, many of us would rather spend an evening with *Private Lives* than we would with Beckett. A critic ought to be able to tell us whether Pinter is going to survive those cruel cycles in public curiosity; and if so, why. Here, Professor Quigley leaves us in the lurch. My own guess is that he will survive, and deserve to survive, in as much as his dialogues capture, in a sorted down, particular form, certain aspects of intimate warfare that psychologists like Laing have missed: that while psychologists have been trying to codify the moves in this warfare Pinter has captured something of its essence. For this reason, if for no other, it is a pity that Professor Quigley has read so much linguistics, and so little of the psychology that now seems nearer his chosen home.

Play and learn

By Anthony Vivis

HEINER MÜLLER:
Theater-Arbeit
127pp. Berlin: Rotbuch. DM9.

Die Umsiedlerin oder Das Leben auf dem Lande
118pp. Berlin: Rotbuch. DM8.

ERNST WILHELM ESCHMANN:
Luther findet J.C.
82pp. Düsseldorf: Diederichs. DM12.80.

Like Brecht, whose influence is strongly evident in the collection *Theater-Arbeit*, and in *Die Umsiedlerin*, Heiner Müller sees the theatre not as "a literary mausoleum but as a laboratory of social imagination". One of the pieces in *Theater-Arbeit* is *Die Drachenoper*, the libretto for Paul Dessau's opera *Lancelot*, which was adapted from *The Dragon* by Yevgeni Schwarz. Heiner Müller presents a socialist Saint George slaying the dragon of capitalist exploitation in a spectacular aerial battle. It has been brilliantly staged in Benno Besson's definitive production at the Deutsches Theater in East Berlin. The themes of *Horizonte I* and *Die Weiberkomödie* are more down to earth, *Horizonte I* is the first act of a workshop production, acted by factory personnel, which looks at the "technological revolution" through the eyes of an *Optimierungsgruppe* who upgrade management qualifications so effectively that they threaten to optimize themselves out of a job. In *Die Weiberkomödie*, which explores the economic frontiers of emancipation", a shop-floor Lysistrata gains equality of status for the firm's women workers by getting them to move a crane which the men refuse to touch.

The subject of *Die Umsiedlerin* is the land reform brought into the DDR after 1945. Here, the revolution is cultural rather than technological: while the farmer's task is to cultivate the soil, the party's is to cultivate the farmer.

As well as a means of analysing conditions, Müller wants the theatre to be a collective learning process, a living critical forum. At yet, his plays lack the imaginative dimension and the theatrical vitality of Brecht's social parables, but his presentation of real people in real social situations marks him out as a more original dramatist than many of his fellow playwrights both in his native DDR and in West Germany.

E. W. Eschmann's *Luther findet J.C.* portrays a very human Christ, who embarks on his Second Coming with misgivings. As Luther takes him on a tour of Christian history, Christ identifies more and more with the victims of his fanatical followers, especially in Renaissance heretic burnt at the stake for discussing religious ideas with Indian, Chinese and Arab fellow-thinkers. Counting the human cost of divine power and glory, the disillusioned Christ dismisses the Cross as nothing but "a tool of domination". Therefore, when a mob of present-day Jesus freaks hail him as their Führer, Christ rejects the role of militant messiah, much to Luther's disappointment, and chooses to remain an anonymous outsider, plain J.C.

Compared to Günther Herburger's apocalyptic treatment of a similar subject in *Jesus in Osaka*, Eschmann's play is tame, but his characterisation of Christ our contemporary is both sensitive and convincing.

Commemorating John Anderson

By John Passmore

Next year it will be just half a century since John Anderson, at the age of thirty-four, left Edinburgh to become Challis Professor of Philosophy in the University of Sydney. The occasion is to be marked by a set of commemorative lectures. A typical, if unusually large-scale, celebration of a local worthy?

It might well seem so. For, except where his pupils have scattered, Anderson is but the echo of a name. The sketchy articles brought together as *Studies in Empirical Philosophy* (Sydney, 1962), like the earlier *Education and Politics* (Sydney, 1931) have attracted few readers. Even when his pupils acknowledge his influence with gratitude, they seldom quote him directly; only rarely does anybody else—Alasdair MacIntyre and Tony Quinton are notable exceptions—refer in his work.

At the same time, this commemorative lecture-series is more than a little unusual, especially in our fragmented culture. It has been organized by an anthropologist: the speakers include poets, psychologists, jurisprudentialists, as well as the more predictable philosophers, historians of ideas, political scientists. If they are no one of them precisely household names, their reputations range, for the most part, well beyond the suburbs of Sydney. The poet A. D. Hope, the philosopher David Armstrong, the historian of ideas Eugene Kamenka will sufficiently illustrate that point.

Nor do they constitute one of those narrow, tightly knit sects in which sometimes succeed in sustaining such a commemoration. The "Andersonians" of forty years ago were such a sect, but they might have been expected to wish to forget their past. For nowadays their politics ranges from conservative to anarchist libertarian; on almost any question their points of disagreement with Anderson and between themselves, are more conspicuous than their points of agreement. Yet there is a kind of family resemblance between them. There is a certain kind of intellectual drabness, a complacent opportunism, an unthinking fashionableness, against which there are permanently inoculated. The man they are still prepared to honour was obviously no ordinary provincial professor.

The prevailing tendency in philosophy when Anderson arrived in Australia was Personal Idealism. Liberal in spirit, radical even, by the standards of the conventionally conservative public and academic figures who dominated university life, it was informed, all the same, by a spirit of reconciliation, at the cost of intellectual and political sharpness. Its proponents were very far from being, as Anderson was variously to style himself, Marxist, positivist, empiricist, materialist or realist. The more radical of these allegiances, one can feel confident, were unknown to the university which appointed him, a university which, not long before, had refused a post to its own Gordon Childe.

Very soon, they were only too obvious.

As his self-styling became familiar, his Australian colleagues supposed that they knew, at least, what they had to contend against. Anderson would be a utilitarian, a strong supporter of the centralized state, a "progressive" educational reformer, an enemy of tradition, an empiricist of the traditional British sort. But to their astonishment, and the disillusionment of those "men of the left" who sought him out as an ally, he proved to be none of these things. He strongly opposed utilitarianism, quoting against it, to make matters more confusing, as improbable an ally as G. K. Chesterton; he was a rigorous critic of the "servile state", this time with Belloc in mind; if he sought educational reforms, this was to reinstate and renovate classical education. For all his dislike of ritual, tradition played an important part in his thinking. As for his empiricism, he rejected sense-data, rejected induction.

Then what did he stand for? For a realism, in the first place, which began not from sense-data but from complex facts. And not only began from such facts, but stayed with them. The transcendental was dismissed—"there are only facts, occurrences in space and time"—but so too, and for much the same reasons, were elementary simples. The least we can ever have before our minds, on Anderson's view, is a complex situation, a state of affairs, a "proposition". To be is to believe in certain ways, for a certain time, somewhere, in relationship to other forms of behaviour in other times and places. As he once summed up: "to find a situation is to find a tissue of qualities and relations, a 'nest' of situations or propositions". (Anderson had been trained in Glasgow as a mathematician and a physicist before turning to philosophy; Burnet's Harmonic Mean rode in the light of Faraday helped to shape his metaphysics.)

Universal propositions, Anderson even more unexpectedly argued, are included among the situations we can find. How they to be derived by induction we could, neither rarely then nor know what we were seeking. If there is no difficulty in recognizing a fire, with the recognition of general properties that entails, then equally there is no difficulty in recognizing fire as something that burns. Indeed, the two forms of recognition, as he argued, are inextricably bound together.

Anderson was far from denying, of course, that we are always liable to make mistakes. This is another point, indeed, at which he diverged from classical empiricism. We can never hope to reach the incorrigible. The complexity of things entails that we can always go astray. We can suppose ourselves to have found what we have not in fact found. But this is as true of "This is red" as it is of "Fire burns".

The mind that finds these situations sharply, for Anderson, the complexity of what it finds. It is as sure a *tabula rasa* than what it apprehends is a sense-datum. Nor is it a bare consciousness. Nothing, he regularly argues, can be wholly constituted by its relationship to something else; mind cannot be simply "that which knows" any more than "what we perceive" can be simply that and nothing more. More specifically, minds, so he maintained, are spatio-temporal complexes of passions, educated, through social institutions, into developed "spirits"—as the spirit of inquiry develops, in the course of our education, out of curiosity. We learn to be critical, objective, in such ways the education of our passions, not by subduing our passions with the help of some sort of abstract rationality.

As warmly as Collingwood or Dewey, Anderson rejected, that, the "spectator" theory of knowledge. Perceiving is something we do, one of our ways of coping with what has armed us. We confront things and people as someone who has expectations about them, arising out of our interests.

It is only too easy, for that very reason, to suppose them to have the characteristics we should like them to have. Or, at least, that we should like them to have with *part* of our minds. For, since our minds are complex, we can be at once satisfied and dissatisfied, can at once believe and disbelieve. Our mental life is a continual struggle, as society is a struggle, between passionate concerns, not between passion on the one side and pure intellect on the other. The passion for truth is one of those concerns.

Anderson's theory leaves no room, so much will be apparent, for annihilation, whether scientific, political or religious. Given the infinite complexity of things, there is no "everything" to be annihilated in every situation, we must "expect the unexpected". Given the infinite complexity of persons, no one ought to be entrusted with total power. Absolute security is a myth; omnipotence, like omniscience, is a childish illusion. To attempt, like Macbeth, to be "safely thus" is to tread the path to destruction.

In his lectures, Anderson proceeded with care. His course began lodged, with a stiff dose of formal logic. Not, as one might have expected, Russell's logic, but an idiosyncratic and highly developed version of the traditional formal logic, reshaped in the light of Russell's criticisms. It had the virtue of being closely related to everyday assertion and everyday argument. Anderson's pupils were continually encouraged to ask such questions as "What exactly is being said?" "What issue is being raised?" "What is being denied?". It was his custom to set, and correct in detail, long essays. His marginal comments, in the spirit of his logic, were particularly directed against any hint of vagueness or pomposity.

For the rest, his lectures were detailed commentaries — although not, in any serious sense, scholarly — on other philosophers, classical, modern and contemporary. They

John Anderson

terminated, in this last respect, with Russell, Moore and Samuel Alexander, whose Gifford lectures on *Space, Time and Deity* had exerted a powerful influence on the young Anderson — for all that Anderson entirely rejected the doctrine of "levels" which is central to Alexander's thinking.

Although he broke so sharply with the Hegelianism in which he had been trained, Anderson continued to admire the scope of Hegel's thinking and to adhere to his rejection of atomistic individualism. The later dialogues of Plato then much less fashionable than they now are—were another of his particular loves. He criticized his predecessors unsparingly, but he did not dismiss their views as "meaningless" or "nonsense". Always he looked for what he used to call

Epic of Capricorn

By Randolph Stow

XAVIER HERBERT:
Poor Fellow My Country
1,16,pp. Collins (Australia). $A20.

Xavier Herbert came upon the Australian literary scene with a bang, and seems set to leave it in the same style. The publishers describe his *Poor Fellow My Country* as "his first and final statement" and "a full and final conclusion to a life-spanning preoccupation with the nature of man". Mr Herbert is now in his seventy-fifth year, so that in the nature of things the prophecy is likely to be fulfilled. And for once the claims of a blurb do not overstate the claims on our attention of the work inside.

Capricornia, published in 1938, made Herbert immediately famous. It won a literary prize—In Australia prizes matter—and quickly became a household word. It is probable that the Northern Territory will some day rename itself Capricornia. Though not very young, its author was greeted as an *enfant terrible*, and the description fits as well now as it did then. *Capricornia* was crude and violent, satirical and disrespectful (one chapter has the memorable heading "Psychological Effect of a Salar Topee"), touching and at times tragic. Above all, it was mythopoetic. Xavier Herbert is the premier spokesman of the white Australians.

A long silence followed, broken in 1959 by a neat and amiable novella, *Seven Emus*, too easily dismissed as slight by critics expecting another *Capricornia*. In 1962 came a second large-scale novel, *Soldiers' Women*, perhaps better received abroad than in Australia, where it was almost unanimously written off as a flop. The following year saw the publication of a collection of short stories, and the autobiographical *Disturbing Element*. Then silence fell again.

Out of it has emerged *Poor Fellow My Country*, the old mythmaker's account of and meditation on six crucial years in Australia's history, as observed from Capricornia-country. Perhaps the largest novel ever to have been conceived and published as one volume, it runs to more than 940,000 words and tips the scale at a shade over 4½ pounds. Extraordinary to relate, it is a fast-moving yarn, a good read. And a literary monument, unquestionably, the like of which Australia has not seen before.

This is not to say that it is a uniformly successful work. It is far from that. If the *enfant terrible* has not withered or staled, neither has he matured very much. Under the crusty exterior lies a large area of the half-baked. But it hardly matters. We accept, and even enjoy the ups and downs of Melville, how long one acquired the taste. Mr Herbert's language, his limited social range, his often offensive opinions, are counterbalanced by a vigour and a sense of excitement which would surprise in a novelist half a century younger.

The action begins soon after the accession of Edward VIII, bringing with it an amnesty for the imprisoned old *koornung* (shaman or medicine man) Bobwirridiridi, who is one way and another, to involve most of the leading characters in his affairs. It ends in the days or weeks following the battle of Midway. The final chapter is an epilogue, carrying the account onward to, it seems, the Administration of Gough Whitlam.

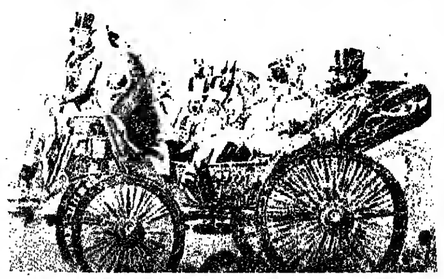
The first scene shows the meeting of Bobwirridiridi and Prindy, an eight-year-old quarter-caste who sees himself as purely aboriginal, in spite of his fair hair and grey eyes. The child has an ear for music, and a talent in magic which make him a very promising neophyte in the eyes of the old *koornung*, the moving spirit in and probable inventor of a cult of the Rainbow Serpent. Prindy's imagination is won, and the novel follows his career through many flights and pursuits, through involvements with Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and know-nothing Australianism to the climax of his disastrous initiation.

Complementing Prindy's aborigines, the "empirical equivalent", for what, however confusedly, they were drawing attention to.

In student societies, the Literary Society and the Freethought Society which formed around him, or on the public platform, he proceeded much less cautiously, ever ready to rail against censorship, chauvinism or superstition—a concept he interpreted very broadly. Attempts were made in the legislature to have him removed from his chair. But not only did they fail, the public outcry which resulted had the fundamentally important effect of establishing the concept of academic freedom on a much more secure basis. If Anderson could not be removed for his opinions, who could be?

To listen to Anderson lecturing through these events on Plato's *Apology*, as part of his standard course, was naturally an occasion. It is easy to understand why the more active of his pupils banded together, against a hostile world, as the those notorious "Andersonians", dove on their sense of being a select few, to their contemporaries in Wittgenstein's Cambridge. They were, for the most part, very different in background from the undergraduates of the same period in England or even in Melbourne. Most of them were under bound to become secondary school teachers, products of the then very selective state high schools, the first generation to attend universities from working-class or lower middle-class families. Anderson's lectures were the sole pupils an education of a very special sort, in which the names of Freud, or Marx, or Sorel, or Joyce were likely to crop up in unexpected places, and the classical world was as "present" as the modern.

They might be delivered hesitantly, often at dictation speed, with few literary graces and in an unpleasant Lanarkshire accent. None of this mattered. Here was somebody thinking; a smoother, more graceful, more conventional style would have seemed inappropriate. And thinking in a way that was a constant challenge to the stubborn certainties of the life around them, the "getting on" was men's proper activity and his goal, security. If on the lecture platform he was a somewhat remote figure and in his casual relationships with undergraduates a mixture of shyness and consideration, they knew whom further



A "diggers wedding": the euphemism for a goldminer's spree which would begin with an ostentatious ride through the streets of Melbourne. A sketch by S. T. Gill, from Pioneer Years *(see page 422).*

Constitution perform much the same function. One feels that Henry Kingsley must have known many Delacys in his Australian years, and remembered them when he came to write *The Boy in Grey* (1869-70):

> All the male adult colonists were down on the shore; and every man had brought his grandmother, and every man had brought an egg, and was shaking his grandmother how to suck it.
>
> "Come here", they cried, as Gil and the Prince coasted along; "come here, you two, and learn to suck eggs. We will teach you to suck all kinds of eggs, not merely those of the emu and the pelagalla, but those of the blue-throated warbler. And we will teach you to suck eggs which we have never seen."

It is a puzzle that such an inveterate grandmother-sucker as Delacy should so impress so many better-informed public figures. The Australian fascists want him for a national leader. The English Commander-in-Chief of the Australian military forces sees in him the saviour of the British Commonwealth, and tries to propel him into a post of high command. Frustrated in this, knowing the Commonwealth lost, he goes off to die in despair at Dunkirk. R. G. Menzies, in pyjamas, sounds the Delacyan opinions, but seems (to his credit, I thought) to doze. On any subject but his own "country", to the aboriginal sense, Delacy tires his audience like some runt of an autodidact from Glasgow.

And the author, who identifies all too closely with this hero, shares his curious impressions of the world beyond Capricornia. Bunny accents abound: stage-Irish, stage-Mittelsuropean, a smattering ceca or twice of Mummerset. Lord Volsey (styled "Lord Alfred") and his fiancée (styled "Lady Lydia") like any other baronet's daughter) speak the lingo of Burlington Berties. Even Capricornia's own insignificant elite, mostly lace-curtain Irish, come in for the same Trobb's-Boylan treatment. Mr Herbert, though ready to take a swing at anything that moves, seems unable to see his target if its station is above the Australian middle-middle class.

However, there is more to the novel than Delacy. There is Prindy, and Prindy is magnificent. One is haunted by the scene in which he engineers the death by drowning of a brutal police sergeant and a black tracker. The weird child, impassive and all-observing as ever, simply waits for the water to do what water does. There is a rapt calm about the writing here, as the narrator watches through those expressionless eyes. Mr Herbert is too infrequently inspired, and Prindy is usually the agent.

The epilogue shows us Capricornia thirty years on. Most of the characters known to us have met violent deaths: deaths always believable, sometimes horrifically so. Volsey's heirs have given way to Texans; the country is torn apart as never before by mining, generally for "strategic" minerals like uranium; the water of the Beatrice River is undrinkable; the Rainbow Pool, symbolic centre of the novel, is dry except in flood season, and littered with the inevitable beer cans.

The "First Prince of the Blood", wearing his chief conservationist's hat, visits Beatrice (renamed Elizabeth) to speak for the environment. At a public meeting Rifkoh, prematurely aged, harangues him on the conservation of the "rights" of Aborigines; and for his pains is thrown into the river by Aborigines of the other sort, now subsisting on alcohol and welfare. She drowns, one presumes, but first has a vision of Prindy, like the vision of a giant blackfellow earlier experienced by Jeremy and by the donkey-teamster, a vision marking their acceptance by the country, their baptism or initiation into aboriginality.

It is at this level of myth or dream that the novel most moves and persuades, though what we hear is hardly more than a roverie of the author's. If Australia, through the fusion of black and white, could have evolved a new breed, attuned to its environment as the Aborigines once were, with (like them and like the Jews) its own sacred topography—if that could have happened, then the question of national identity would no longer be a question. All the characters who respond to this ideal know it to be unrealizable; they approach it most nearly when simply following certain domestic Jewish rituals at Jeremy Delacy's private wild-life sanctuary, which is no dependable sanctuary for human beings. Still the vision haunts them, and is likely to stay in the minds of at least Australian readers.

In the long unwinding of the novel, almost every twentieth-century creed, in the widest sense, is glanced at and rejected with scorn. Even the Jews are not exempt from criticism, by one of their own number; and the brutality of certain aspects of aboriginal life is illustrated with a hideous economy. The conclusion is black: nothing more comforting than the *rilevamento* that dolts and villains sometimes cancel each other out, that if you are pursued by SS-like Commonwealth Police you may be saved by SS-like communist militants. Mr Herbert seems at the end to have nothing more optimistic than this to say about his country, in the European sense of that word. The situation is desperate, we gather; but if one is angry enough, not dispiriting.

The text work was prepared for the press by Robert Roseman, who deserves the credit he gets, though the book is by no means free of misprints, and there are misspellings even in plain, commonplaces ("appreise" for "apprise") which ought not to have escaped the editorial eye. It has been very well produced, and should prove durable. The publisher's decision to print it in full was surely the right one, though one hopes it will be possible one day to bring out a sharply abridgment for readers deterred by its bulk and by its demands on their time.

That Poor Fellow My Country is an Australian classic, perhaps the Australian classic, it became convinced at an early stage. In these days of rather starveling novels, it is a work of quite astonishing amplitude, vitality and passion. Posterity may have different canons of judgment, but posterity will visit the site. An emblem of the book, I suggest, is the cantrevarsal mullock-heap on Delacy's station. This stuff is from time-mining, it is actually rich in tantalite, new-fangled stuff far more valuable than tin. I predict that Capricornia's inheritors are going to go on fossicking in these pages, finding in them tonights and consolations which the author's contemporaries may have missed.

Up memory creek

By Barry Humphries

JOHN LARKINS AND BRUCE HOWARD :

Great Australian Book of Nostalgia
295pp. Adelaide : Rigby.

Australians have hitherto directed great energy towards the effacement of their origins. Their past was an embarrassment. When the city of Melbourne, that enclave of Englishness set in remotest south-east Asia, was selected for the 1956 Olympic Games, the city fathers decided to purge the town of all architectural elements which they felt might prove risible to foreign visitors. They feared that Melbourne with its abundance of Victorian Italianate banks, hotels and terraces might strike its guests from more progressive lands as stodgy and provincial. The official wreckers, with their unerring eye for buildings of distinction and historical value, soon cleared the way for gimcrack etudia of plastic and expanded metal, and the dust of pulverised Victorian mansions had barely settled when the first Olympic athletes arrived at their bulldozed destination. The pilot of one aircraft bearing the crack Russian and German shuttlecock teams was on the point of taking off again from Melbourne airport in the full conviction that his plane, through some gross navigational blunder, had alighted amidst the smouldering ruins of Dresden or Stalingrad.

It might have been expected that this frantic obliteration of the past or its architectural symbols would have abated with the departure of the last Latvian shot-putter. But no. The rage to renovate escalated beyond all bounds, not only in time but also in space. It leapt like some remorseless bushfire from capital to capital until even the smallest community felt an uneasy civic conscience if it horboured within its boundaries a building more than forty years old.

Only in the present decade have Australians become at all aware of the extent to which their brief heritage has been desecrated in the name of progress. A generation reared among the bland brick-veneer milk bars and squalid service stations of the go-ahead 1950s era beginning to ask awkward questions of their hamster-happy elders. Developers who so recently spent a fortune denuding their properties of nineteenth-century furniture and ornament are now spending an even vaster fortune retrieving the same embellishments from junk merchants and antique dealers.

Australians have lately become familiar figures in the flea markets of Europe, rummaging among its olde wares for anything which might lend a "period flavour" to their parvenu pubs and brash boutiques. However, this attempt to re-create the texture of an urban environment which has largely vanished is only one aspect of Australia's cultural debilitation. Having at last come to feel their architectural losses, Australians are now beginning to perceive a deeper and more troubling deficiency in their cultural life. The chip once worn almost jauntily upon the shoulder has now descended to lodge nagingly in the gut.

The exact nature of the Australian malaise is difficult to define with precision unless one subscribes to the view, held by some extreme thinkers, that this entire colonial experiment should be acknowledged to have been a failure and be swiftly brought to a close. Some critics have recommended that Australia, for lack of anything which lies within the bounds of possibility, a powerful modern drug is necessary to render the Australian condition supportable. The drug is at hand. Nostalgia. This most fashionable of palliatives for the spiritually deprived has been well tested in Europe and America. It is a powerful sedative and such earlier side effects as Persephone's Neck and the Lot's Wife Syndrome have been long ago eliminated. The nostalgic drug comes in many forms: Proust took it in the shape of a small madeleine cake dunked in tea though in its most popular modern form the drug is administered rather with the coffee-table.

The latest addition to the large range of heavy tablets designed for this article of nostalgia is entitled *Great Australian Book of Nostalgia*, by John Larkins and Bruce Howard. It is a massive volume containing a heterogeneous assembly of old photographs and advertising material drawn not only from public sources but also from many private collections. There are pictures of vaudeville artistes, old mining machinery, athletes of yesteryear, Victorian beer labels, bathing belles of the 1930s, Sir Robert Menzies and bushfires. Yet, in spite of this book's dimensions there will be no Australian nostalgiac who does not remark the absence of some personally treasured image from his own past. I deeply regretted the exclusion of an interesting, if over-exposed snapshot of myself nursing an injured wombat at the Colin McKenzie Wildlife Sanctuary, Healesville, in August, 1941. The incorporation of this photograph would have made the *Great Australian Book of Nostalgia* a far richer and more meaningful experience for me, as would the inclusion of some 2,000 similar childhood snaps from my private albums.

The editors are of course at liberty to draw freely from this body of intensely evocative material for subsequent editions of their book. I know there are often countless other readers who have been disappointed to discover similar oversights in Larkins and Howard's otherwise excellent volume, and who would truly be too willing to supply the editors with millions of snapshots, not only of themselves but also of deceased relatives and total strangers.

It seems that we have here uncovered the need for a work of encyclopedic proportions far beyond the scope of a single volume. It is surely not too fanciful to propose that an entire government department and an army of archivists be at once assigned to the task of gathering together, cataloguing and publishing every visual image which has ever meant anything to anyone in the history of the Commonwealth.

But the work cannot end there. Other senses beside the visual have recorded valuable impressions of a vanishing past. These too should be preserved. We need a book which may be also heard, tasted and felt.

It is not enough to dilute an Australian's new-found appetite for nostalgia by pictorial means alone, without simultaneously assaulting his nostrils with the aroma of smouldering gum-leaves, the scent of sun-baked sandstone and the heavy, lingering odour of stale spaghetti sandwiches. He must be made to hear the commingled voices of the bushwhacker, Dame Nellie Melba, Eric Welsh, while his palate is bombarded with the evocative flavours of flat Foster's lager, Allen's lemon-Moss Gum Jubes and stale spaghetti sandwiches. The great Australian nostalgic experience would then be total. With such an instrument at his disposition the modern Australian would find that re-living was an effective substitute for living for he could escape not only from the cultural barrenness of the present but also from his television set, his past would be re-mythologized by a host of pre-war radio announcers, sepia footballers and nude models from the master brush of Norman Lindsay.

Until publishing technology copes with the ambitious programme I have here outlined, readers will be entertained by the 295 pages of 1.87 kilogrammes of Larkins and Howard's folio. However, they may do well to reinforce their coffee tables in readiness for the inevitable succession of colossal tomes which will inevitably follow.

In the beginning

By A. G. L. Shaw

J. B. LEVI and G. F. J. BERGMAN :

Australian Genesis
Jewish Convicts and Settlers 1788-1850
360pp. Hale. £6.

The Jewish population of Australia has always been small, exceeding one per cent of the community only between the first settlement and the arrival of the second fleet. Up to 1850, about 1,000 Jews came out as convicts, and in 1851 there were still less than 2,000 on the whole continent; but as in many other countries, leading Jews have played an important part in Australian history, and one welcomes *Australian Genesis*, an account of the origins and early members of Australian Jewry, both convict and free.

The story is a fascinating one, because many of the principal characters were people who contributed significantly to the mercantile, cultural and political life of their adopted country. In this regard, J. B. Levi and G. F. J. Bergman have much of interest to relate, but, as may be inevitable, we are left with a slightly misleading impression of the Jewish community; for the book naturally highlights the notorious and the successful, and thus overlooks, or plays down, the fate of the rank and file—and in this, of course, it echoes the contemporary chronicles. Does that transportation to Australia was, for the convict, a doorway to fame and riches. It becomes clear, of course, that fortune did not always continue to abide on those who had gained temporary successes; one of the interesting sidelights of the story, which could perhaps be more emphasized, is the final failure and bankruptcy of many a merchant and entrepreneur who seemed to have overcome his early difficulties. Any who believe that in business the Jew is shrewder than the Gentile will find little support for such a theory here, as time and again, over-optimism and over-investment brought apparently flourishing concerns to ruin.

Few, though they were, the Jews in Australia were probably not very different from a cross-section of the community—one "or" two notorious, for good or ill, must disappearing from the view of the historian, unless recorded in the Tasmanian convict records; one may regret that in such compilations it is hinted at. Perhaps the Jewish contribution to the early Australian theatre is less readily rivalled and less well-known; here it is well-

On the convict side of the ledger, too many of the old clichés about the transportation system respond, despite work on the subject in the past twenty years which has done much to modify them. There are mistakes in detail, too many to list here, which though minor in themselves, cumulatively breed a feeling of uncosiness about reliability. As one must protest that although it is all very well, and justified, to convict Governor Darling of anti-semitism, it is rather hard to add him to carry the guilt of the apparently similar feelings of his successor, Sir Richard Bourke, even if it is apparently still a great sin in Australian historiography to say anything critical of the latter.

The illustrations are numerous and well reproduced, but too many of them are old favourites which have appeared time and time again in the histories of this period. The "new" ones show what can be found; it is a pity that the authors did not seek for more. Though presumably it was the decision of the publishers, not of the authors, to put "footnotes" at the back of the book (and without any page-headings to show where they are), the latter should not have included in them comment and criticism as well as references to sources, which the reader is all too likely to overlook.

Here, in short, are the constituents of the proverbial curate's egg, but though the reviewer may be inclined to notice what he disapproves with rather than to stress the parts that are "good", there is no doubt that the latter predominate.

From May 3 to 5 the University of Exeter will be holding a symposium on Australian arts and letters. Those taking part will include Germaine Greer, Professor Leonie Kramer of Sydney University, Professor David Lowenthal of University College London and Professor Barnard Smith. Further inquiries should be sent to Peter Coleman, Queen's Building, Exeter EX4 4QH.

Material benefits

By Kenneth Minogue

The most popular poetry ever produced in Australia—outselling even Banjo Patterson—is a vernacular epic describing the reclamation of a larrikin by a decent respectable girl. It is *The Sentimental Bloke*, by C. J. Dennis, which began its life as a series of poems in the *Bulletin* and first came between hard covers in 1915. To seek in it clues to Australia is a bit like looking for British bearings from Andy Capp; but any dealer in national characteristics inescapably uses the simple lines of caricature.

The Sentimental Bloke explains a lot about the position of women in Australian life. In Victorian times, Australian women, like those of other Anglo-Saxon communities, took up the responsibilities of moral and cultural uplift—responsibilities from which they have been recently been disentangling themselves. As Christopher Lasch has written of a similar case:

> In America, the care and preservation of culture had early been entrusted to women. . . They were the moral custodians of society. They came to represent cohesion, decency and self-restraint; and the ideal of the home, over which they presided, became the national religion.

The men often became the rebellious infidels of this religion. But while in most other countries this tension led merely to the creation of a few exclusively male clubs and preserves, Australian males went farther. Women were scourged from the public bars, and to this day in most hotels they can be found creeping furtively towards some out-of-the-way room designated as the "lounge". The famous bond of "mateship", a peculiarly close form of masculine comradeship, was often seen by woman as a device for excluding them. It may not have begun that way, but it certainly developed an anti-domestic character. Even now the battle continues. At the recent International Tribunal of Crimes against Women, in which the women of the world were invited to particularize the specific forms of victimization in each country, Australian women came up with what they called "the cultural crime of mateship and its violent consequence, mutually pack rape". British readers should perhaps be reminded that mateship does not always lead to rape.

The struggle that took place in the soul of the Sentimental Bloke was between a passion for drinking and gambling with his mates on the one hand, and domestic bliss with Doreen on the other. Sin never had a chance. Doreen is a mistress of the techniques of the silent reproach followed by the remission of sins. After the Kid has slipped back for a night in his evil ways, Doreen knows how to handle him:

> She never magged; she never said a word
> But set an' looked at ma an' never stirred.

The Kid explains with remorse, wishing that she would shout and hurl things at him. Her silence is only the more effective. When she forgives him, treats him like a "hinvalaed" and brings him beef tea, his resistance collapses.

Most Australian men, however, have been a good deal less sentimental. Australians are in world class as gamblers, and not far below the world record for beer consumption. Being priestesses of a highly restrictive notion of domesticity lies some less and less to seem rewarding to Australian women. The responsibilities of uplift were not worth the self-abnegation required. Australian women often responded by going into competition with the "mates". In some ways they anticipated the modern rush to unisex. The consequence was noted in a much-resented passage in John Pringle's *Australish Accent* in which he suggested that the beautiful girls who adorn Australia's surf beaches were less sexy than those on the Mediterranean: "In Australia there is no eroticism: the handsome, sun-burnt girls play vigorously in the surf or lie on the sand and watch the young men riding the great Pacific waves to to the beach."

This is one of those remarks which remind one that national generalization is, like the throwaway plastic of intellectual interchange; it results from the communion of mood and accidental circumstance. But this particular generalization sticks in the mind as pointing to something that is real in Australian life and is implicit in *The Sentimental Bloke*.

It is that Australians are constitutionally suspicious of anything high-flown, anything that strays far from the observable facts of nature. And eroticism, like any aspect of a developed culture, is the result of seeing more than is actually visible. The point is best illustrated by the Bloke's response to art.

For Doreen is priestess not only of the home, but of culture as well, and during their courtship she takes the Kid off to see *Romeo and Juliet*. C. J. Dennis shows what happens when the bard is filtered through a certain kind of understanding:

> "Lady, be yonder moon I swear!"
> Wot's jist plain stoush wiv us, right here today,
> An' than 'e climbs up on the balkiny;
> An' there they smooge e trset, wiv pratty words
> Like two love-birds.

In such au encounter as this, either the poetry rises to the art or the art sinks to the man. The Kid understands of Shakespeare exactly what he can transpose into the terms of his own experience:

> Wot's jist plain stoush wiv us, right here today,
> Is "valler" If yer fur enough away.
> Some time, some writer bloke will do the trick
> Wiv Ginger Mick,
> Of Spedger's Lane. 'E'll be a Romeo,
> When 'e's bin dead five hundred years or so.

The Sentimental Bloke is not entirely deaf to the music of the bard, and he certainly enters into the spirit of the play. He can recognize that a different perspective can transform the character of what is seen. But his main reaction is to reduce Shakespeare to local experience. "Valler" is just some literary conca poured over the kind of life the Kid himself knows. It is only Australian women (like the women in *The Rainbow*) who have an intellect of respect for what they do not themselves fully understand. But this is perhaps mainly a remnant of their uplifting role. The strongest strand of the culture as a whole is no-nonsense empiricism.

There are many ways in which one might explain the Australian tendency to reduce everything to the fundamentals of nature. But certainly one important part of the story is to be found in the fact that Australia, like all the other newly settled parts of the world, inherited the dream of a new and better society which has haunted the Western imagination over the past two centuries. Socialism is the Australia of theoretical striving, and Australia is the socialism of practice. And the constant of this dream was seen much more easily in its rejections than in its affirmations. Hierarchy and authority were thought to have been the curse of Europe, and Australia was to be a place of equality, one in which men did not (as was imagined to happen in England) pull their forelocks to their superiors. Much of that complex

From the Great Australian Book of Nostalgia, *reviewed opposite.*

element of English life which is often discussed as "deference" was rejected as mere "servility", the worst of human vices in Australian terms. There is nothing that will produce an instant a hostile response from an Australian as the suspicion that he is being patronized. For some British visitors, Australia is a minefield in which they must tread warily lest they unwittingly raise an explosion of the many patronizing stereotypes of the Pom.

Most of this hostility, however, is skin deep and the most obvious consequence of the aspiration towards a properly modern form of humanity has been to create a resilient set of people who have replaced more complicated springs of behaviour by an enterprising sportiness. It is said that Rommel, talking to some captured Australian officers in the Western desert, said to them: "Why are you fighting here? It is not your war. Are you here for the sport?" They were not, quite, but there is very little that Australians do that does not have a certain sporty element about it, summed up in the national motto of "Have a go". It gives them a friendly directness that often cuts right through the Gordian ritualc of much European intercourse, the sort of ritual that enforces social distance. One of the best accounts of Anglo-Australian differences in those respects is in D. H. Lawrence's *Kangaroo*.

There is, however, another side to the friendly directness of Australian life. Egalitarianism is fundamentalist; it sees human life as an encounter of *fundamentally* similar human beings with similar needs and appropriately similar attitudes. When Montaigne commented that even kings are human and must sit upon their own behinds, he was correcting a disposition to regard kings and aristocrats as creatures of a different species; no Australian would need such correction. A man's a man for o' that, wrote Robert Burns, but an Australian would be likely to ask: for all what? Men must eat, and a meal is likely in Australia to be assimilated to biological need rather than to social ritual. As a waitress said to me in a country motel as she served a plate of symmetrically arranged bacon and eggs: "Not a bad looking feed, eh?" The idea

Australian spoken here

By Eric Partridge

of a "feel" does not contain the poetry likely to inspire the creation of a cuisine of any distinction, and Australia often presents one with the anomaly of an abundance of superb materials clumsily put together. Barbecued steak is a fitting symbol of the relation between nature and thought in the national culture. *Picnic*, when in the best-selling novel *Picnic at Hanging Rock* the Englishman remarks that "nice girls don't like being whisked at by fellows they don't know", his Australian friend tells him: "Don't you believe it. The sheilas is all alike when it comes to the fellers."

In this last case, of course, the contrast is not merely between an Englishman and an Australian; it is also one of class. But this merely reinforces the point, for so far as the Australian imagination is concerned, "class" is merely a delusive veneer that wealth or prestige may cast over the fundamentals of the human situation. And, so far as Australian life is concerned, this belief is largely true. Australia is very nearly a classless society. There are significant variations in the way people live, but they depend upon such things as occupation, religion, and money. This does not mean that the defects widely ascribed to class—snobbery and status inferiorities—are absent, though a wild guess would suggest that they are a little less intrusive than elsewhere. Nor does it mean that Australians don't think that there are class differences. A motor mechanic I met recently told me he much preferred New Zealand to Australia because "there's less class there. People take you as you are". He was no doubt misled by the fact that status systems don't easily accommodate outsiders. For in the sense of fully articulated ways of life composing a single community, class is insignificant in Australia.

Australians tend to think of aristocrats as feeble, chinless and lubed; it is almost as if they think that whatever purports to be more than human is really less than human. John Anderson (discussed elsewhere in this issue) became the most striking philosophical phenomenon in Australian intellectual history partly because of his penchant for [illegible] of moral devices. [illegible] Anderson's chair at Sydney, David Armstrong, is one of the foremost exponents of philosophical materialism on the world scene. Reality is construed as a network of spatio-temporal occurrences to be explained in terms of the laws of physics, and moral ideas, God, monads and other such entities are challenged to prove themselves by causal interaction or to be expelled as spooks from a decently realistic universe. The pull of rationalism can be found in all levels of Australian life.

It certainly makes Australian culture a bracing and refreshing challenge in much that is merely habitual in Europe. It would be a dull visitor who did not in at least some respects experience Australia as a libertinus; and this is connected with the fact that the Australian *Weltanschauung* (and one needs this pompous word to bring out the significance of what otherwise might look like a string of casual improvisations) has for some time been having a free ride on the back of the global *Zeitgeist* (one pompously irresistibly calling up another) of admiration for rebellion and nonconformity. But this also means that Australia fares the problems that lie concealed beneath the treacherous moral ideal of liberation. For the liberated take their bearings perpetually from what they imagine has enslaved them. They thus depend on their oppressor for their sense of their own character. Australia stands for the rejection of the familiar evils of Europe.

But what is the positive content of this national identity? We shall certainly not find an answer to this question by attending to those Australian intellectuals whose cry is that Australia is searching for a national identity. Most Australians are in fact perfectly secure in their enjoyment of their Australianness, and do not need some cultural image packaged for export and for the images of national narcissism. The question is rather: what has in fact evolved under the truth of explicit self-characterization? And it would seem that beneath the rebelliousness, often the aggression and sometimes the truculence to be found in Australians, there lies a lazy, good-natured hedonism which enjoys the obviously available gifts of nature: sunlight, physical vitality and material abundance.

The sentimental bloke of half a century ago had no problem; but the sentimental bloke was in one obvious respect a fake. His wildness, as expressed in drinking, gambling and thumbing his nose at the police, turned out to have been little more than youthful wild oats. Under the influence of Dorothea, he became a home-loving, women-respecting, hard-working, law-abiding [illegible] with two objects of English—the New Zealand and the Australian—and then, from 1921 onwards, to acquire an adequate knowledge of the parent, the only, language.)

This dictionary, which has been excellently printed and strongly bound by the Griffin Press, Adelaide, runs to 1,210 pages of dictionary proper, preceded by ten pages of the customary preliminaries, from which we learn that the work was produced by the academic staff of La Trobe University and others. There are some splendidly and uncompromisingly pragmatic appendixes, including "How to use the Dictionary" (comments on headwords, pronunciations—"educated", not "String", definitions, word families, etymologies, and "Common Error"), a list of abbreviations, a note on "word parts and classical roots", a list of Latin verb-parts and prefixes, a very useful list of foreign words in English, a table of common spellings, a table of chemical elements, a brief table of scientific units, and an aid to metric conversion. In the list of foreign words, the editors might, I feel, have acknowledged their debt to Alan Bliss's dictionary; and (this I mention diffidently) they might even have added that they were (as they seem to have been) indebted to my etymological dictionary, *Origins*—but then I'm accustomed to being pilloried without acknowledgment. The Heinemann Australian Dictionary is an ambitious project, carried out with an agreeable modesty and a singular lack of fuss. However, I wish that those who conceived and planned it had been less reticent about the part played by the numerous editors. For instance, why omit the name of the general editor, who must have had a gruelling journey before he could complete such an arduous task? The preface roundly tells us that "dictionaries can no longer afford to be quasi-literary works"—another dig at the *Concise Oxford*?—"and this book is intended to be as useful to the students of science or social studies as to the students of English literature". Yet the list of consultants at La Trobe University, in the state of Victoria, contains not a single professor of any language, whatsoever, although this university has two chairs in English, as well as one for Russian and one for Spanish—none of them to be sneered at, either! What is more, the long list of "consultants in other fields", like the short one of the "editorial team", contains not one name of a notable writer—and this despite the lip-service paid to "the students of English (including, presumably, Australian) literature".

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Here is a book that will fulfil the requirements of Australian secondary school pupils and, I'd say, of first-year university undergraduates in the sciences, in technology, in the social sciences, and also those of that amorphous congeries, the general public. It will also serve as a valuable guide to teachers (at all levels) and students of Australian English, not only in Australia, Britain and the United States. It will, if kept up to date, continue to meet those requirements for a long time to come. But having made that much clear, I shall not, I hope, be rated a quibbler if I subjoin a plea to the group of Australian scholars who have for many years been reported to be at work on a comprehensive dictionary of Australian English along historical lines, an updating and enlargement of E. E. Morris's *Austral English* (1898), a book of far greater merit than has been generally acknowledged: a plea that they make a thorough and far-sighted job of it. The project is not merely desirable, but imperative, and I trust that it will not be vitiated by chauvinism, that overblown nationalism which distorts any book and perhaps especially a dictionary—as in the case, for instance, of Friedrich Kluge's *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der Deutscher Sprache*, which, issued in 1883, suffered an intolerable "Aryanization" under the Nazis, a dreadful process partially halted by Walther Mitzka in 1960 and finally effaced by the same very fine scholar in 1963.

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And here I interpolate a strictly irrelevant comment. "Non-Standard English" has *street cred* [illegible] "bad English", the latter being felt to slight the masses. You have gone much further than this—or, at least, some authorities have done so. Witness the uproar that arose on the publication of the third *Webster's International*, where the language of the "lackie" or taxi-driver, the docker, and other such pundits, in short the illiterate (so that a taxi-driver is inevitably no any more than a tramp) is placed on a par with that of the great novelists and poets and playwrights and scholars. What these "advanced" lexicographers and grammarians forget is that while traditional lexicographers and grammarians (as opposed to the procrustean sub-species, the rigid prescriptive variety) have desired, and striven, to preserve are those distinctions of meaning and implication which ensure that the most subtle and profound thought, the most delicate of perceptions and feelings, the most precise and accurate nomenclature of the rapidly increasing accumulation of scientific and technical terms, be adequately transmitted.

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Heinemann Australian Dictionary
1,259pp. Heinemann Educational Australia. A$5.95.

This sensibly planned dictionary has, the editors tell us, been written to meet the need for an accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date reference for Australian secondary students, as well as for a wider readership. "It is the first dictionary of its kind to be written in Australia, in *Australian* English. This does not mean an English Dictionary with a few Australian words thrown in." I would here to think that this remark was intended as a gibe at the entirely admirable latest edition of *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* with its well-balanced, knowledgeable supplement of Australian and New Zealand words and phrases: "It means that all definitions are written in 'standard' Australian, a language with few words unique to itself, but with a wide range of important variations in usage."

This strange misconception of Australian English as "the Australian language" goes back to H. L. Mencken with his monumental *The American Language*—a book that led his devoted disciple, the late Sidney J. Baker (a New Zealander by birth) to entitle his own valuable, if imitative, study *The Australian Language*. As G. L. Brook has so clearly shown in his fine work on the English dialects, English in the original, the only true, English language, and all the variations, whether American or Canadian, Australian or New Zealand, or South African, not to exclude the English spoken and written on the Indian subcontinent, are strictly—not pedantically—to be regarded and treated as dialects. Which is not to say that every one of these variations has not become a self-justifying, independent form of English. (I speak without prejudice, for I have been obliged to familiarize myself with two dialects of English—the New Zealand and the Australian—and then, from 1921 onwards, to acquire an adequate knowledge of the parent, the only, language.)

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Stand, the enterprising quarterly published in Newcastle upon Tyne, has dedicated most of a recent issue to new writing in Australia. Among the poets, the late Francis Webb makes the strongest showing with four poems; there are two sonnets from John Tranter, two poems from Richard Packer and one by Robert Harris. Feminist stirrings come from the short stories by Christine Townend and Amy Witting, each of which suggests something of the problems Australian women face through the competition of maleship. The remaining prose ranges from Michael Wilding's homage to Jack Kerouac and an odd, obsessional short piece by Kris Hemensley, to Peter Carey's impeccably detailed slice of Australian life. The Australian number of *Stand* is available at 25p, including postage, from 25 Haldane Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 3AN.

Limiting the risks

By Clive James

GRAHAM BURNS:
Kenneth Slessor
52pp. Melbourne: Oxford University Press. Paperback, $A1.75.

With all that matters of him occupying no more than two out very bulky volumes—one of verse, called *Poems*, another of prose, called *Bread and Wine*—Kenneth Slessor nevertheless continues to be one of the really substantial Australian poets. Substantial and, beyond that, promising even more: binding inwards greatness. He lived his full three score and ten years and died five years ago, yet somehow seemed still to be only on the verge of accomplishing what was in him.

Slessor's was a remarkable gift, between Christopher Brennan, for whom the claims made are usually too high but whose individuality was unmistakable, and A. D. Hope, who was an international poet from the beginning even though resolutely chauvinistic. Slessor's is the bridging talent. He raised all the problems about the relationship of the Australian poet to European culture. He never found Hope's solutions but on the other hand he did not succumb to Brennan's neuroses: he wrote to the limits set for him by an insoluble dilemma, and then stopped. You cannot read his poems without pondering the might-have-beeus. On the other hand, what he did achieve is of permanent value.

Graham Burns's little book is a commendable introduction. Without presuming to answer it, Mr Burns knows the abiding question about Slessor: why does his poetry so often suggest that the full force of his imagination has not been committed? It is easy to go overboard about Slessor's work, but finally it is more edifying to stay disenchanted, since a full appreciation of his achievement depends on realizing that to some extent it remained potential. Mr Burns is always ready to withhold notoriety from the Slessor admirers who have contributed to treating him as an artist who was rather beyond the lyric poems he left us, even when those lyrics were masterpieces.

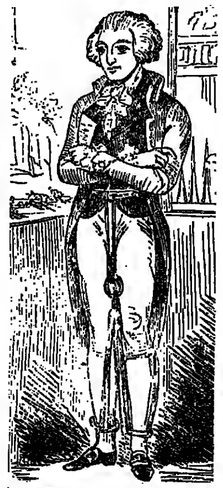
And masterpieces some of them are, even though generations of Australian schoolboys—it was already happening while Slessor was alive, to his great embarrassment—have been told to think so. Slessor's language at its easy height has an unforced richness, an understated but pervasive musicality, that must be any young poet's ideal. "Five Bells", his most famous poem, has every kind of interest in its ambitious design, but the first thing that always strikes any sensitive reader is the confident originality of its local imagery, carried forward by a deceptively natural iambic pulse—quite literally unforgettable.

You have no suburb, like those easier dead
In private berths of dissolution laid—
The tide goes over, the waves ride over you
And let their shadows down like shining hair . . . .

Ducking under the breakers and watching their shadows on the sand below, there must have been scores of times in my student years when I recalled that last line. The first two lines might have been written by Wilfred Owen or indeed any letter-day Georgian who had learnt Owen's lessons, but that last idea in Slessor's very own, and seems to me even now to be expressed in the uniquely Australian language which an many Australian poets sought, and still seek, in vain.

"Australianness" has always been the philosopher's stone, or poet's stone, of Australian culture. Every means has been tried in order to attain it. Incomprehensible vocabularies composed of arcane references to flora, fauna and aboriginal folkways have burgeoned, withered and died. The arbitrary symbolism of the apocalyptic 1940s in British poetry was a miracle of tautness compared to its Australian equivalent, which had all that plus home-grown totemism. The aim has always been to make a fresh start free from the dragging weight of the European heritage.

Language is a continuity and in a continuity there can be no such thing as a fresh start, but for a long time the fact could not be admitted. The Slessor admirers—the anti-academic urge was too powerful. As Mr Burns points out, Slessor managed to break free of this bind. His early poetry shows a certain amount of European culture being absorbed, without any doomed attempts at renacendauca. Pretending in a dramatic monologue to be Heine, he sounds more like Browning, but even more than that he begins to sound like himself.



A contemporary engraving of George Barrington, a gentleman thief transported to Australia in 1791: five years later he introduced the first theatrical performance in the colony with a prologue containing the famous lines "True patriots all, for be it understood,/We left our country for our country's good". One of the numerous well-chosen illustrations, many of them in colour, from Australia! Australia! The Pioneer Years, *a consistently lively and informative history compiled and written by R. M. Younger (287pp. Adelaide: Rigby, $A14.95).*

All kinds of influences are detectable (Mr Burns might have mentioned Flecker, whose sickly moon surely provides the illumination on much of the early romanticism about the sea) but the important thing is that when Slessor turned towards Australian subjects he was already maturing beyond the self-destructive ambition to talk about them in a nationalist language. At first he strained for effect, trying to achieve it as most gifted (and all giftless) young poets do, by novelty of expression. But he soon grew out of that, to the point where his originality of diction emerged naturally out of his originality of observation—the desirable order of events, since if originality of diction is the first aim then originality of observation tends not to happen, being usurped by mannerist postures.

Slessor began as a King's Cross bohemian who worshipped Norman Lindsay and ended as a leader writer for *The Daily Telegraph*, a newspaper of strictly conservative views. It was not a particularly distinguished intellectual record. He was never a scholar as Hope is a scholar. All the more extraordinary, then, that he should have surmounted his early pretensions, fighting his way free of them by creative instinct.

"Five Bells", "Captain Dobbin"—most of Slessor's finest poems are about Sydney Harbour. Yet when we look into *Bread and Wine* we see that his prose on the same subject is at least as wealthy in vision, and often more so. His dispatches from El Alamein—war correspondence which for outstrips Hemingway's in the evocation of battle—make his anthology-piece poem about the war in the desert, "Beach Burial", look a bit impoverished. The transfigurative potentiality of Slessor's poetry was never fully realized, perhaps because he was not notably interested in society as such—he was a lyric poet by the circumscription of his personality.

But over and above that consideration there is the fact that his full resources as a writer were for some reason held back from his poetry. When a poet's prose manifests qualities that his verse is starved of, we are entitled to suspect that he has not taken his final risks as an artist. Why Slessor did not take those risks is still something of a mystery, which Mr Burns's pamphlet does not pretend to clear up. Ultimately, I am convinced, Slessor's diffidence had something to do with the uncertainty of his role as an Australian poet—a role which he was too intelligent to fulfil unreflectively, but not intellectually formidable enough to transform. He lived it as a problem, and was restricted by it. Nevertheless he left us a generous legacy, which Mr Burns is well qualified to discuss, although no educated man should ever use the expression "life-style" except in jest.

Contours and commentary

By M. C. Bradbrook

JAMES McAULEY:
A Map of Australian Verse
342pp. Melbourne: Oxford University Press. $A13.75 (paperback $A7.25).

For what was termed a Sturmalin, the Journal Club of Flinders University invited me to an old disused Unitarian chapel to the Adelaide foothills, where "in primitive pastoral surroundings . . . a shady weekend of relaxed study and discussion" was offered. Miles from anywhere, accompanied by a steady obbligato of rain on the roof, with a popping light that worked on a coin money, an outside loo and galleons of wine, a wheezy grantophone began somewhere near midnight to play "The Beggar's Opera"; and Action replayed how deep are Australia's roots in the period of its founding—in the dry wit of Gay, Fielding and Crabbe.

The compiler of *A Map of Australian Verse* cites Crabbe's preface to his *Tales* as the manifesto he would have liked to set before his own *Collected Poems* (1971). "While in vulgar estimation all that is not prose is poetry", observed Crabbe, yet "those who address their productions to the plain sense and sober judgement of their readers" may claim, with Chaucer, "many pages of coarse, accurate, but very striking description", and with Pope, "actuality of relations, acuity of description, and poetry without atmosphere".

James McAuley's map, part anthology and part commentary, gives the contours of a fairly considerable territory. Other anthologists, including poets, have made passages, from H. M. Green's *Modern Australian Poetry* of thirty years ago to the large two-volume collection of T. Inglis Moore and Douglas Stewart and Judith Wright's *Oxford Book of Australian Verse*. McAuley, who was part-author of "Ern Malley's" lucubrations, named one of his own early collections of essays *The End of Modernity* (1959); ironically, he now drews down to the smallest, smallest crate with the derkest history, contributions from the neo-Modernists of the north and from round the rim of the continent to where Adelaide and Melbourne challange the literary hegemony of Sydney. His own Hobart boasts its own group of poets.

The students for whom this collection is designed will find here nine writers, who offer, in the words of one of them, Judith Wright, "a present to be lived in and a past to nourish us". Interchapters and more critical groupings of poems are interspersed; brief biographies are added, with critical extracts that may leave issues unresolved, for "nothing is final or unquelified" —but no punches are pulled.

Inevitably the first names on the map, after a salute to early ballads, are those of Christopher Brennan and John Shaw Neilson; Neilson gets the bigger slice of territory and rightly so. This uneducated singer, raised on "Proud Maisie" and Burns, in the pure rhythmic power of his lines belongs more securely in the tradition then does the discoverer of Mallarmé. At some point, a Brennan was bound to appear, to satisfy that anxious desire for connoisseurship which produces among young students winetasters, and the cult of *sprezzatura* or of the hypodermic needle.

The younger poets who rush off into "open form" don't stay there—even poor young Michael Dransfield (not represented here, but dead at twenty-four in 1973) flirted with the establishment as well as the underground, and in the annual *Poets' Choice* for 1973, earned his tribute from the veterans A. D. Hope and Judith Wright. These last two, with McAuley himself, are among that group who, in "the fermont of the forties" (as it is here termed) achieved the take-off. With Slessor, Douglas Stewart, Campbell and Rosemary Dobson, they make up the solo performances in this orchestrated work; the Melbourne group are of course represented (Buckley, Webb, Wallace-Crabbe).

"Knowledge", says Laura in *Voss*, "was never a matter of geography. Quite the contrary; it overflows all maps that exist." McAuley onn open his section on "The Sixties end after" with his fellow Tasmanian Gwen Harwood's controlled quarsaina, "In the Park"; and beside Bruce Beaver with his "Letter to Lives Poets" and Dylan Thomas, Swift, Francis Webb, Mary Gilmore are predictably invoked. One can be found the very solid figure of Lee A. Murray, writing about killing a pig, in a display dio spare, frugality of Australian verse, this might be set beside Guy Butler's recent verses on the tribal bullslayers, in his *Selected Poems* from South Africa. This map is meant for those who wish to explore historically.

Australian poetry began in a paradoxical land that was at once prison and Utopia. It is out for an Australian modernists to go racing after the later (inferior) Lowell for confessional poetry, when in the harshness of their beginnings they may find a close better suited to the world of Solzhenitsyn and Vaclav Havel.

Since it may now be apprehended that body as subject but as form and style, the distinctive quality in Australian writing no longer need be assessed as in the days of Furphy ("offensively Australian") or the later days of Lindsayworbocks. Nor can it easily be avoided. The genius of Australia has been displayed supremely in its prose—none could dispute the pre-eminence of Patrick White—but while the verse does not attain his scale, it shares the intensity of his vision. The intensity derives from concentration and control.

After each technological advance to their lucky country, Australians are tempted to battle none to the outback. Nostalgia for the primitive is amply satisfied by frequent strikes, which can, for instance, turn an airport into a wilderness where the stern struggle for repossession of the baggage may feel pretty well like the road to Cundagai. Poets, however, have no need to seek special conditions to breed their own hardiness. The preference of the great majority for cricket for days at the beach makes for soldiers among the minority—the surveyors, psychiatrists, lawyers, housewives, who by their united efforts produce the little volumes and the familiar magazines.

If the teaching of Australian literature could be related to its contemporary English literature—from the eighteenth century to the present—it would provide a more natural and relevant setting than does *Beowulf* (or Bail). The final note in this book quotes the western Max Harris, who as an undergraduate on Ada Adelaide published "Ern Malley". In *Angry Penguins* the was prosecuted for indecency and fined £5):

> "There remains the hard core fact that the young poets are rushing life: Gadarene, swine, towards death, great cloudy, emotional wallow. . . . What's more, we have to say that it's beautiful *in it for its place*."

Zarathustran walkabout

By Jack Lindsay

NOEL MACAINSH:
Nietzsche in Australia
185pp. Munich: Verlag für Dokumentation und Werbung.

Australia might seem an unlikely place for a development of Nietzsche's thought; but perhaps the image of the lonely free spirit, Zarathustra, suited the artist or outcast isolated in a vast untamed continent. It gathered the elements which Australians at least liked to think they owned—self-reliance and independence—and lifted them into a new self-contained level of intellectual life. That, anyhow, is to a considerable extent how I saw the Nietzschean creed as applied in the arts by my father, Norman Lindsay, its leading Australian exponent for some seventy years from around 1900.

Noel Macainsh glances at this aspect of Australian Nietzschianism in his section, "The Lindsay Aesthetic". That aesthetic he sees as strongly influencing many poets such as R. D. Fitzgerald and Kenneth Slessor. But his main theme is indicated by his subtitle, "A Literary Enquiry into a Nationalist Heritage". He deals at length with William Baylebridge, who from 1910 expounded in verse and prose a strongly nationalist position in terms of a vitalist vision of human evolution guided by eugenics. Baylebridge, whose real name was Blocksidge and who was a successful businessman, died in 1942, leaving money for a collected edition of his works. Four volumes appeared in 1961-64, edited by P. R. Stephensen, and Macainsh is editing the final volume. Baylebridge, an odd secretive character, of whom little is personally known, never refers to any sources; but there has been general agreement by critics as to his Nietzschean basis.

Macainsh for the first time examines the matter thoroughly and shows that while this claim can be upheld in a general way, Baylebridge had little insight into the deeper aspects of Nietzsche's thought, and that he certainly owed much to Shaw, especially his *Man and Superman*, and to the advocates of selective breeding who used Nietzsche's name in support of their schemes. To clear the ground, Macainsh makes a scholarly examination of the relation of Nietzsche's thought to Darwin, Haeckel, and Schopenhauer; and indeed his book is a valuable clarification of Nietzsche's essential position against many misunderstandings and vulgarizations — though Nietzsche himself, it must be admitted, was at times his own best parodist. Also, in the matter of eugenics, there is the added difficulty that the main source is the book posthumously compiled by his sister, *The Will to Power*, which, Schlechta has argued, consists of rejected material. Macainsh, while admitting the many problems raised by this book, argues rightly that it has to be taken into account in assessing Nietzsche's impact.

Certainly the core of Nietzsche's system lay in the idea of self-development. He substituted subjectivity for the unfolding of spirit in history in Hegel's objective idealism, while seeking to carry over the dialectical tensions inherent in Hegel's world-view. In Nietzsche the spirit is drawn down into the individual, in whom it creates the struggle for power, for the transcendence of the existing self, not for power over something outside the self. "The will does not strive towards power", observes Macainsh, "as towards something other than itself, but is the willing power that wills to overcome itself." There is nothing here that relates to the nation; Baylebridge, in elevating the nation as the great sphere in which evolution must be guided to ever higher ends, was looking rather to Hegel's idea of national spirits as one level of the finite individuation of the spirit, and abstracting it as the supreme goal. Again, Nietzsche was strongly opposed to antisemitism, unlike P. R. Stephensen, who became Baylebridge's disciple.

Baylebridge, then, glorifying the "national spirit" and drawing heavily on schemes of eugenics, saw the perfection of the nation as the goal of evolution, which at the same time was a will-to-godward. For him the world was a unity which man with limited understanding viewed as a plurality; for Nietzsche the world was a chaos which men with their limitations insisted on seeing as more or less unified. For Nietzsche individuals formed a bridge over the chaos; for Baylebridge it was the spirit that formed a link between individuals, finding its highest expression in the resurgent nation with its "consciously regenerated" stock. Along these lines Macainsh shows the profound differance between the two thinkers.

It was P. R. Stephensen who tried to put Baylebridge's ideas into action. A Rhodes scholar whom I had known well at Queensland University, he joined me in the Fanfrolico Press in 1927 in London. Macainsh does not check his account of events with mine in *Fanfrolico and After* and in *Meanjin Quarterly* (Winter 1974), or he would not have repeated uncritically several of his later statements, such as that he left the Communist Party in 1929, finding it was only "banditry disguised as a political philosophy". He remained a communist until at least 1930, as is proved, among other things, by his own published writings at the time. Returning to Australia, in part to publish novels with my father's aid, he developed his nationalist ideas and was finally set up by Baylebridge to publish on his own account. Macainsh tells the story of the events leading to the formation of the Australia First Party and movement; a story also told by Bruce Mildren in *The Puzzled Patriots*. In his periodical, the *Publicist*, Stephensen developed strong support for Hitler's position; and when the war came, he and other members of his party were arrested and interned. The inquiry held in 1944 found that there was substantial reason for his detention.

Macainsh might perhaps have stressed more how Stephensen thus straddled both "the Lindsay Aesthetic" and Baylebridgean nationalism. When we first got together, he had little knowledge of Nietzsche. The connection came when I wanted to produce an edition of the *Antichrist* in order to use as illustrations some of my father's drawings; Stephensen agreed to translate the text which we set in Poliphilus capitals to get a Roman monumental effect, though the result did not make for easy reading. From our press he took in various elements of the Dionysian outlook as set out in my *Dionysos: Nietzsche Contra Nietzsche* (1928); elements that suited his ardent and vehement character. Then in Australia, with his early political ideas transformed into nationalist mysticism, he moved over to the Baylebridgean creed, into the advocacy of which he threw his considerable powers of enthusiasm, with unfortunate results.

City lights

By Bernard Smith

DOUGLAS STEWART:
Norman Lindsay
A Personal Memoir
220pp. Nelson (Australia).

This little book is an exercise in devotional piety, another contribution to the nourishment of the Lindsay legend to which the author Douglas Stewart has addressed himself assiduously for over thirty years, first as editor of the Red Page of the *Bulletin* and than as literary adviser to Angus and Robertson.

They were close friends. In 1934 Norman Lindsay, then aged fifty-five, left the home which he had established in 1912 for himself and his second wife, Rose, at Springwood in the Blue Mountains and took a studio at 12 Bridge Street, Sydney. The previous five years, "the phase of the hunchback" he called it, had been for him, creatively barren. He hoped to defeat the lethargy by returning to the city and teaching himself to his own studio to paint in oils. It was there that a few years later Margaret Coen, Mr Stewart's future wife, became Lindsay's "pupil and acolyte" and Stewart himself became a regular visitor (Lindsay was then the *Bulletin*'s political cartoonist and Stewart its literary editor). From 1940 until his death in 1969, the Stewarts were Lindsay's most constant friends and companions. It was Mr Stewart who read the funeral oration and did more than anyone to ensure that Lindsay's wish that his home and its contents become a National Trust property was successfully carried through. He has been a magnificent friend.

As a cotorie publication, the memoir (it is embellished with illustrations of the author and his wife in the company of the great man, and with Lindsay's portrait drawings of their mutual friends) helps to define the Lindsay coterie during the later years of his life, but makes some extraordinary claims for it. For example:

> Up those winding stairs to Lindsay's studio, whether to receive commendation for work pleasing to him and the gods or to discuss the problems of a novel, or to look at a new painting, or simply to enjoy the stimulus and pleasure of the wide-ranging conversation trudged most of the people who, in one way or another, as practitioners or patrons, were notable in the effloresence of the forties.

For the visual arts such a statement is nonsense. The generation of Nolan and Boyd, of Grace Crowley and Ralph Balson, of William Dobell and Noel Counihan, each in their own ways developed in opposition to almost everything that Norman Lindsay stood for. For the writers of the 1940s the situation is less clear. Slessor was certainly influenced by Lindsay's elitist vitalism, as John Docker has made clear. Indeed Docker's *Australian Cultural Elites* makes an invaluable contribution, among other things, to our understanding of the Lindsay legend. But by the 1940s Slessor was virtually a spent force.

Younger poets such as A. D. Hope and James MacAuley did not theo see themselves as the disciples of Norman, though some of them made their pilgrimage to Springwood later as they came to see that they had in common with him than in youth they had realized.

Which is significant. For Christopher Brennan, Lindsay and John Anderson, the philosopher, gradually established, as Docker traces in his book, a pervasive hegemony over intellectual values in Sydney. They and their followers came increasingly to give themselves airs as aristocrats of value whose duty it was to preserve their veritles (they spent much of their time defining such varities among themselves) from the crowd. The efflorescence of the 1940s and the more recent anti-Vietnam and resident-action conservation movements were oppositional to that hegemony; but they have not replaced it.

Lindsay was not a genius. He was a highly skilled draughtsman and etcher. His paintings are brightly coloured illustrations which lack a sense of tone and form; and he painted flesh (which is a convived ideological way meant much to him) the colour of rancid putty. The widar implications of his anti-semitism, his spiritualism, his belief in the existence of Atlantis, are yet to be studied fully. He rejected all forms of modernism as cultural degeneration. He lacked originality of mind.

But he was the first to act out, with courage and with a certain sense of theatre, a lifestyle for the Australian artist and writer which has become highly influential in Sydney. It is a kind of white primitivism in which the noble frontiersman seeks redemption from philistinism by ritual acts of love and sex upon the white mother-goddess of Austrelo-European nature. A lifestyle which denies the profound sociality of creation, which turns history into an intellectual or a moral monad in an attempt to escape from it; a hegemony fit for the Tom Smiths of this world. Sensing its growing power, Norman's son Jack, with admirable prescience, departed from the city in 1926 and has never returned. Thus he has never had the good fortune to see either the Bridge or the Opera House. But his sympathetic and penetrating article "Norman Lindsay: Problems of his Life and Work" (*Meanjin*, March 1970) is still the most illuminating account of his father and his father's values.

Mr Stewart's *Norman Lindsay* includes a useful account of Lindsayana held in Australian galleries and libraries, and a check-list of books written and illustrated by him.

Gum-tree and grand tour

By Peter Quartermaine

BERNARD SMITH :
The Antipodean Manifesto
Essays in Art and History
222pp. Melbourne : Oxford University Press. £9.25.

In 1948 Bernard Smith observed that "time and time again it has been left to the migrant to this country to look at the local scene in a new way". He was writing of a migrant artist, Salt Herman, who painted what the *Bulletin* termed "Sydney's slummiest aspects". But his visual exploration of the city's inner suburbs is valued by Professor Smith not only as an art critic and historian but as an Australian who himself lives in a charming but neglected suburb of Sydney which he has helped to preserve from "two enormous freeways and indiscriminate high-rise developments".

Another remark in the essay on Herman introduces a concept which can be traced throughout *The Antipodean Manifesto*, linking the Cook who took possession of Australia with today's namesake travel service:

> Most of the art of Australia is still an uneasy compromise between the gum-tree and the "grand tour". We are either arrogantly nationalistic or arrogantly cosmopolitan in matters of art; and our paintings become the expressions of our attitudes rather than the sensitive realization of our feelings. How often a rapid Cook's tour of the European galleries has left our artists suffering for the rest of their lives from a chronic aesthetic dyspepsia because they fear the charge of provincialism.

A "grand tour" with the antipodes as its starting-point opens perspectives on to an eighteenth century in which the young Joseph Banks replied to those who thought his project for a grand tour of the world was folly: "Pour shall be one round the whole globe"; and in which William Wales, astronomer and meteorologist on Cook's Resolution, and later mathematics teacher to one Samuel Taylor Coleridge, inspired the young poet with accounts of his travels in the South Seas. Arguing from entries in the journal kept by Wales during 1772-74 (now in Sydney), Professor Smith concludes:

> The most carefully planned and the most scientifically and efficiently conducted expedition ever made up to its time in the realm of reality, provided the poet with a world of wonder and a nucleus of recollections from whence emerged in his own good time the most romantic voyage ever taken in the realm of the imagination.

The work of both Herman and Coleridge illustrates "the relation of regional content to the universal forms of art", and both men are at home in a book which gives "antipodean" reverberations more complex than the reader might expect (in a reviewer hope for) from the title. William Dobell and William Morris, Mr Whitlam and Catherine the Great, all feature in essays which reveal an informing concern for the relation of artifact to local context and tradition, and of society, institution and state to the artist. Exploration of the ways in which "the consciousness of the nation to hold in trust by artists" leads to a recognition that "the predominance of landscape painting has created a false consciousness of what it is to be an Australian" and to the positing of an alternative which

> draws its respect from men as fabricator and artificer rather than from his condition as a natural man of the woods: from *homo faber* rather than *Homo naturalis*. It replaces mythical mno by historical man and it emerges from a growing awareness that Australians possess a history.

So "Art and Industry: a systematic approach" (1974) suggests a reading of how "the industrialization of production affected the history of visual art" after 1750, while "The myth of isolation" (1961) criticizes inaccurate notions of Australian painting formed on the Whitechapel exhibition of that year (and indeed Sir Kenneth Clark's 1961 volume on Sidney Nolan often recalls Marcus Clarke's stress upon "the subtle charm of this fantastic land of moonstruckes" in his 1880 preface to Gordon's *Poems*). Against this vision of Australia as exotic, end of its art as "standing outside the Renaissance tradition" Professor Smith quotes with approval Robert Hughes (then "an architectural student of Sydney University") who noted in the Whitechapel catalogue: "To think of Australia as a *jardin exotique* is a fashionable way of missing the point, for to its painters it is not an exotic garden. It is the place where we live." Professor Smith adds that "it is also a place where Renaissance tradition has lived"; artistic curiosities gathered on a grand tour of the antipodes, and orchidized by *The Times* as examples of "an art . . . isolated from any European tradition older than Impressionism", prove to be of traditional stock grown under southern skies.

"William Morris and the twentieth century" (1963) suggests that "the Middle Ages have existed twice over, once in reality and once as an imaginative experience" and that it was such an imaginative experience which "led the best thinkers of the nineteenth century to discover the limitations of their own time". The same seems to be true of the discovery of the Antipodes, with the important difference that today they talk back to point out our own imaginative fallacies—"the quality of a culture is best judged, in the long run, by informed critics separated from it in both time and space".

Early interpretations of Australia were determined by the twin poles of scientific inquiry and imaginative sensibility, as Professor Smith has established in his classic work *Europeans Vision and the South Pacific* (1960). That study ends with the introduction of photography (Humboldt wrote to Fox Talbot "Daguerra is my Chimborasso!"). Professor Smith stresses that "myth-making" played no part in the "tireless accuracy" of Cook's journals, but that

> the earliest drawings and paintings of Australian towns were made . . . to provide evidence of civil progress and good government . . . tokens of British order in a southern wilderness. I wonder what they really looked like?

The first reliable evidence to put against what one convict artist called his "picturesque descriptions" of the English garden in the Antipodes (one watercolour shows a convict rolling out the governor's footprints in the gravel path while kangaroos safely graze on the lawn) was provided by the camera. In the 1850s composite panoramas of Sydney and its harbour surpassed in truthfulness the detailed topographical views of the early colonial artists, and the role of what one Australian journal termed in 1860 "that invaluable delineator, the photographic apparatus . . . free alike from the flattery of the artist or the adventitious charms of writing" has yet to be properly assessed in discussing visual interpretations of the country in the nineteenth century. At that time the development of photography in Australia paralleled the movement of a highly urbanized population towards nationhood more closely than in any other country, and relations between photography and painting during this period could well be explored in terms Professor Smith proposes:

> a more balanced account of post-Enlightenment art might emerge if, instead of writing separate accounts of, say, the influence of photography upon painting, or of painting upon photography we kept constantly in mind the interaction of both arts in their shaping of the total depictive demands of society at any particular time.

General issues raised in this collection are closely focused upon in essays treating questions of immediate local importance. The interpretation by Sir Herbert Read of the bequest to the University of Sydney for the creation of a faculty of fine arts provokes a spirited defence from its first professor in 1964 of "evolution grounded in tolerance and the scholarly disciplines of the humanist", which extends the argument of an earlier essay on "The social role of this art museum" (1946). The argument is continued in "The Whitlam government and the visual arts" (written in 1973 as press comment, but after recent events already of historical interest) which raises issues relevant to all societies committed to stimulating creative endeavour by government funding, even if some of the problems ("we are a nation with loads of cheap money") are—or were—peculiar to Australia. Considering the two-million-dollar tangle of red tape and "Blue Poles" Professor Smith concludes:

> If you want to develop a genuinely creative arts policy you supply the bulk of your funding to the growing points of art, to the support of young unknown artists rather than to the support of overseas dealers.

The Antipodean Manifesto was originally the title of a foreword to the 1959 Antipodean Exhibition in Melbourne, which Professor Smith was responsible for drafting. He has elsewhere defined that exhibition as "an attempt to defend an indigenous tradition against the uncritical acceptance of currently fashionable overseas modes". The inheritor of the title is an eloquent justification of his "defence of the image" over the thirty years the essays span; a justification founded not only in artistic precepts but in a commitment to man and the world he makes.

Home and Colonial art

By Rudiger Joppien

BERNARD SMITH (Editor) :
Documents on Art and Taste in Australia
The Colonial Period 1770-1914.
299pp. Oxford University Press. $A11.25 (paperback $A8.25; UK, £7.25).

Bernard Smith's *Documents on Art and Taste in Australia* is a collection of essays, journals, letters and other writings on both changing and continuing aspects of colonial culture in Australia. It reveals characteristic features which were peculiar to Australian cultural life in the nineteenth century concerning the early reaction to a new land and its landscape, "the interaction of English taste and the colonial social and geographical environment, the moral preoccupations and aspirations of Victorian Evangelists and Utilitarians, the growing concern about art education", practical art-instruction and the establishment of fine-art institutions, "and finally the triumph of nationalism in art and taste". Thirty-one authors, from Sydney Parkinson, the first artist to set foot on Australian soil in 1770, to Frederick McCubbin, one of the members of the Heidelberg School of painting and a patriotic defender of a native and original Australian art, are represented in this book which covers a period of some 140 years. Not all of those included were artists, neither do all who were artists express themselves on specific problems of art, but some times on socially related issues.

The emergence and evolution of art and taste in a pioneering land like colonial Australia was a complex subject, as it still does always body of people : artists, writers, architects, poets, clergymen, natural historians, journalists and educators. Striving to raise the standards of public taste and intellectual life in the Australian colonies, their common goal was to contribute to the establishment of the arts and their integration into a young and settling society. Because during the nineteenth century Australia was made up of several colonies each of which was separately governed from London, the encouragement of the arts for a long time remained purely locally oriented. Sydney and Hobart were the first towns in which some artistic life was established, on however modest and provincial a scale; they were later followed by Melbourne and Adelaide. Patronage from a population which was fully engaged in the struggle for colonization was extremely problematic even for the few artists who settled. Financial insecurities caused many of them to return to Europe after a few years, thus disrupting further progress. But however slow and struggling the beginnings, by the end of the nineteenth century, about a hundred years after the arrival of the first amateur and natural-history artists in that country, Australian art, which was originally composed of a few local trickles, was about to develop into one great national stream and to speak with one voice. The Heidelberg School of Australian Impressionism become the first artistic movement to generate in Australia; as a school it was of super-regional composition, and included artists both from Sydney and from Melbourne.

Australian art of the colonial period before the Heidelberg School came into existence has often been dismissed. Artists with strong patriotic feelings like Sydney Long and McCubbin severely criticized colonial art for its European style and were contemptuous of its failure to interpret the Australian landscape on a grand and heroic scale. Long held that only the native-born artist could paint the Australian bush, for only he had "the lonely and primitive feeling for this country". A modern critic, the Australian art-historian Robert Hughes, whose study *The Art of Australia* is widely known, is critical of the colonial artists for their apparent lack of quality and skill, and says that "hardly one good painting was produced in Australia between the arrival of the First Fleet [1788] and the appearance of Tom Roberts at the end of the 19th century". Mr Hughes's perhaps not unfounded view of colonial provincialism in the nineteenth century (when "Australia was a hopeless cultural backwater") is by no means singular, its tradition in Australian art-history is of long standing and has prevented a more objective assessment of the colonial period. This point of view however does not sufficiently take into account the peculiar conditions under which these works were created and which make them difficult subjects for formal aesthetic judgement.

Documents on Art and Taste in Australia is one of the few art books published in Australia to take colonial culture seriously. Admittedly it does not offer an aesthetic evaluation of works from that period, but by introducing a number of socially relevant texts it creates a new and deeper dimension in which the phenomena of colonial art and culture can be more properly seen. The texts are arranged in chronological order, but some topics are given priority over chronology in order "to illustrate the current preoccupations of a period". The book is conveniently divided into sections, ranging from "In a new land", "Some early reflections on nature in Australia", "Some early reflections on art in Australia", etc, to "The impact of Paris" and "Nationalism", all of which designate major steps in the early development of the Australian arts. All sections are preceded by comprehensive discussion of the problems involved and every author is then separately introduced by a biographical headnote. The texts that have been selected form a mixture of the already known and the unknown. Thomas Watling's letter to his aunt [1794], or James Smith's review of the historical "5x5 Exhibition of Impressions" in Melbourne [1889] have frequently been referred to in other publications on Australian art but are generally not quoted in full. Here Professor Smith's book provides a useful service as an anthology for further consultation. Of perhaps even greater interest are those texts never published before or of unfamiliar origin, such as the essays and lectures of art promoters like John West, Benjamin Duterreau or Joseph Sheridan Moore. It is through their papers, delivered at Mechanics' Institutes, or issued as articles, that we can get an idea of the oddly mixed idealistic and pragmatic arguments of the Victorian apostles of the arts which were so effective in Australia as anywhere else.

Another section gives some glimpse of the artists' social and economic conditions in Australia at the time by quoting from the hitherto unpublished diaries of the painter Eugen von Guérard and the sculptor Thomas Woolner, two artists who came to Australia to search for gold. Though these diaries offer no insight into any of their works but describe their experiences in the diggings, they are curious documents of the hazards to which many of the nineteenth-century artists were exposed. Previously unpublished, too, were the letters of John Peter Russell, Australia's great expatriate artist, to Tom Roberts from Paris in the 1880s and early 1890s. Russell, an intimate friend of van Gogh, and Toulouse-Lautrec, communicated his impressions from the Parisian scene and notes on colour theory, thus acting as an importeur link between French and Australian art.

Documents on Art and Taste in Australia is a well-considered collection of texts, diverse in the nature of the contributions, yet coherent in theme and provocative to further research. As a book of documents which approaches colonial art not from a visual angle but from the fields of taste, patronage and socially related phenomena, it is, to my knowledge, the first of its kind to have been published in Australia. It continues and expands a theme which Professor Smith has pursued for many years, notably in his works *Place, Taste and Tradition* (1945), and *European Vision and the South Pacific* (1960); he is also the author of *Australian Painting* (1962), a survey of Australian art from its beginning to present times. In all these publications Professor Smith, at present the director of the Power Institute of Contemporary Art in Sydney and therefore much engaged in the problems of modern art, has stuck to a theme which in his own words could be described as "vision changes values". *Documents on Art and Taste in Australia* is the latest result of his continuing interest in the relationship between art and society, in the emergence of taste in a geographically isolated society such as Australia's, and its changing concerns according to the needs of this society.

Professor Smith's interest in the formation of aesthetic views and the examination of their underlying patterns, reflects the peculiar evolution of art and taste in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Australia. When the settlers arrived in that country they brought their culture, as Professor Smith once observed, in little transportable units like artist's materials and books. But, however disposed of material became, their ideas gradually developed into works of art, art schools and artistic circles, academies and museums. The smallness of the population, the limited number of people active in the arts, the decentralisation of the country into three or four cultural centres, all these factors make the evolutional process of the arts in colonial Australia fascinating to observe. Australian colonial culture provides a laboratory for the study of art and taste under unusual, unprecedented social and economic conditions. Professor Smith has made this point more intelligible than ever.

Because of the illumination of historical problems Professor Smith's book is of primary interest to Australians. But it transcends the Australian point of view and touches upon problems which were common to other countries which had in the nineteenth century a population of European settlers and an aspiration towards the arts. Where the Australian will find documents of importance relating to his own country, the non-Australian scholar who is interested in the expansion of nineteenth-century European art, will be enabled to study with regard to one particular country the general pattern in which the arts developed in the colonies, outside the main stream of European cultural life and yet definitely dominated by European ideas.

Leading ladies

By Morton Bloomfield

RUSMARIE THUE MORLAWEDGE (Editor):
The Role of Woman in the Middle Ages
195pp. The State University of New York Press. $12.50.

JOAN M. FERRANTE:
Woman As Image In Medieval Literature From the Twelfth Century to Dante
166pp. Columbia University Press (AUPG). £4.95.

The rush to write books on women which is such a notable feature of our time helps to confirm, if any further confirmation is necessary, the central thesis of the sociology of knowledge: that the pattern of interest in the past is largely determined by current concerns. It is, of course, true that books on women in history—one thinks of those by Mary Beard and Lady Stenton—were written earlier, though some were due to earlier feminist drives like the suffragette movement, and not necessarily to a general contemporary concern. The strong ideological bias of some of the current crop of books is very clear, and this must be allowed for. On the other hand there are serious books on the subject being written and one rejoices that some of the neglect of the subject is being remedied.

The basic problem is not one of ideology but rather of definition and methodology. It is difficult to know what is specifically female as opposed to human in studying women. To what extent are women's problems part of the problems of human kind and to what extent are they unique to women? Certain points can certainly be made. Problems of pregnancy as such are certainly basically women's problems. But are problems of the exploitation of women to be considered separately from the problem of exploitation of men or not? The answer is not simple.

[illegible] in the Morewedge collection, David Herlihy's "Life Expectancies for Women in Medieval Society" is a splendid example—an excellent study of what problems face the historian interested in this question and how far they may be answered. Other sociological questions concerning women are amenable to investigation—age at marriage, average age span at different periods of as contrasted with men, questions such as female prostitution or the role of women in cotton mills in the nineteenth century. The influence of women on vernacular literature or, courtly love, for instance, is also open to investigation although precision is more difficult.

The problem really arises, with cultural history or broad social generalizations. Were women badly treated in the Middle Ages for example? Yes—and much evidence can be gathered to support this. But if we try to answer the question of whether they were treated worse than men we run into difficulties. Or if, for instance, we study the ideal woman of a period in the past, are we studying Dante's (or Chrétien de Troyes's or whoever's) ideal woman, or the "medieval picture" of an ideal woman?

These are the questions provoked by *The Role of Woman*, a collection of papers delivered in 1972 at a State University of New York at Binghamton conference. Besides Dr Herlihy's essay, we have papers by Franz H. Bäuml on heroines of the Nibelungenlied and Kudrun, Gerard J. Brault on Iseult and Guenevere, Aldo S. Bernardo on the transformations of Petrarch's Laura, Charity Cannon Willard on Christine de Pisan's *Livre des Trois Vertus*, and Philippa Verdier on women as portrayed in the marginalia of some medieval manuscripts. On the first three of these, one wonders whether the study of these literary characters tells us more about medieval women or about medieval authors.

Professor Willard's paper is more helpful if we wish to understand the role of middle-class women—and particularly widows—in the later medieval period; but one wonders how far one can go in extending the experience of one extraordinary woman to other women. Dr Verdier's essay lists a large number of pictures, many of which are fanciful (like women overthrowing knights or even friars in jousts), and therefore unreliable evidence. Professor Willard's essay comes closest to really grappling with the subject. It is largely a biography of Christine de Pisan with especial reference to the *Livre des Trois Vertus*. In being told what it was like to have been Christine, we also learn of some of the problems facing women of that epoch and class. But we still do not know what and to what extent we can extrapolate.

However, even as essays on medieval subjects, some of these do not live up to expectations. Dr Bäuml Arrangée too much and [illegible] of his argument, which is psychologizing and hypothetical and overly concerned with the differences between oral and written composition. The author also assumes his readers can translate Middle High German.

Dr Brault's article is a little more satisfactory and we learn here that Iseult and Guenevere are contradictory and complex characters; that the first is a healer and the second not; that Chrétien deflates Guenevere in Christian terms and so on. These notions are neither new nor exciting. Dr Bernardo's essay is particularly concerned with Petrarch's methods of composition. The editor's introductions, both in the work and to the pleasant illustrations at the end, are turgid and unclear.

Joan Ferrante's little book is much more interesting, but is far too short for a convincing presentation of her thesis—that the twelfth century had a more positive view of woman than did the thirteenth century. The brevity and selectiveness of the examples tends to raise doubts as to the validity of the argument. The book also suffers from the methodological problems alluded to above. The fine chapter on Dante's attitude towards his "sacred women"—Beatrice, Lucy and the Virgin—tells us much about Dante and little about women or even attitudes towards women in Dante's time. The title to the book indicates that the author considers her subject to be the image of woman in medieval literature, but the book tells us more about Aquinas, Bonaventure and Dante.

On the whole, the book lacks depth. Before contrasting twelfth-century attitudes towards women with those of the thirteenth century, one must study a wider selection of writings, embark on a discussion of the role of virginity, of sexuality in and out of courtly love, probe Neoplatonism and examine ideals of monastticism and Christian perfection. Ms Ferrante only uncovers the tip of the iceberg. When she gets away from commonplaces and making dubious generalizations and begins to focus on the writings themselves, she is excellent. Unfortunately the book lacks sufficiently well-based generalizations to contribute notably to its intended subject.

Signs of haste appear not only in the conception and development of the book, but also in numerous slips, omissions and inconsistencies. Although Ms Ferrante usually transliterates her foreign quotations, she does not do so all the time. She wavers in her use of names (e.g. Rachel and Rachele for the wife of Jacob). I find it difficult to understand her principles of selection (e.g. her decision to consider only "symbolic genres"). Why? And what are they?) The female in the Song of Songs is not only the Church; she may also be Israel, the individual soul, Mary and so forth. It is now more or less agreed that although containing much earlier material, the *Glosa ordinaria* is a twelfth-century composition. Nominalism was not a major force until the fourteenth century.

It is not a characteristic only of the early and High Middle Ages to link the symbol with the thing symbolized, but characteristic of every age. The author does not separate personification from symbolism and the full significance of the feminine grammatical forms of most personifications needs more exposition. Real women are not necessarily an advance on personifications, even in terms of realism. It is not Christian to say that man can "achieve the highest human feat—union with God". Ms Ferrante does not seem to be aware that marriage imagery for the relations of the soul and Church to God did not originate with Dante. She translates *ingenium* as "wit", a word which is misleading in its modern English sense. The author ignores the whole subject of the medieval physiology of love when dealing with Dante.

Yet the book has its charms and insights. It is learned and at times very acute. The discussions of courtly love and love in Old French romances are most valuable, and the consideration of Bonaventure's writings on woman is a welcome departure from the general tendency of historians of medieval ideas to concentrate on Aquinas.

These two books confront us with the [illegible] humanity of men and women and a concerted attempt to separate human from purely female or male issues, we shall surely founder. It makes a great deal of difference whether the maltreatment of women (or of men for that matter) is an aspect of human cruelty or an aspect of male (or female) cruelty. Men mistreat men as well as women and women maltreat women as well as men.

Literary material must be used with caution and intuition cannot be entirely ruled out, but anecdotal, literary and artistic approaches are not enough. Although there are a few promising books on the subject, the study of women is too important for us to view conclusions with indulgence. Some evidence concerning the mentality of women subject seems to be in order.

A hare worked in needlepoint: an enlargement of a detail from the Renaissance tapestry series "The Unicorn at the Fountain", illustrated in A Needlepoint Gallery of Patterns from the Past *by Phyllis Kluger (191 pp. Cape. £5.95), which contains 102 needlepoint designs derived from Western and Near Eastern art in all media, including mosaics and stained glass. Mrs Kluger's designs are all taken from details: the re-creation of an entire painting or work of art in needlepoint is, she says, "an abomination".*

Before birth

By J. B. Post

M. ANTHONY HEWSON:
Giles of Rome and the Medieval Theory of Conception
A Study of the *De formatione corporis humani in utero*
266pp. Athlone Press. £10.

Giles of Rome did not allow continuous involvement in church administration to inhibit his activities as a teacher (initially as a controversialist, latterly as doctor of his order), nor to stem his considerable contribution to the scholastic literature of the late thirteenth century. He turned his lively, though seldom original, mind to any topic which might illuminate contemporary philosophical problems; hence, in 1277 or thereabouts, he wrote the treatise *De formatione corporis humani in utero* as a defence of Aristotelian teaching on embryology.

The core of M. Anthony Hewson's study *Giles of Rome and the Medieval Theory of Conception* is an exegetical commentary of the treatise, supplemented by chapters puzzling Giles and his work into historical and intellectual context. In many respects this contextual material seems designed to accompany an edition, but for most purposes Mr Hewson's exposition serves as a text; the 1515 table of contents and a descriptive summary are supplied as a guide to Giles's original order of argument.

Giles set out to review in minute detail the Galenic teaching on conception and animation, drawing his authority from [illegible] medical writers such as Avicenna and Averroes. His treatise falls roughly into two sections, the first dealing in elaborate and mainly abstract complexity with the origin of individual human life; the second dealing somewhat more directly with the development of the foetus and its accidental characteristics. Mr Hewson patiently dissects this detail, nearly always intelligibly and often lucidly. He adduces parallels and points to sources which his author has not made explicit; more important, he is copious and able to show how and why Giles adopted particular lines of argument, and what bearing the latter made of them in a wider philosophical context.

It is not by any means clear that the treatise merits this laborious exhumation. Mr Hewson is in no doubt: "The capital importance of *De formatione corporis* is that its author was one of the earliest thinkers to undertake a full-scale investigation into so important an aspect of human physiology as procreation", and by virtue of its attempt to reconcile scholastic attitudes with recorded clinical observation and rudimentary quantification it occupies "an important place in the literature of medieval humanism as well as in the early history of modern science".

Yet Giles attempted no innovation and offered little inspiration in this field; indeed, his treatise is exemplary in its sterility. He pursued his essentially philosophical purpose with reference to the more abstract passages from the compendious medical writers, apparently disdaining the gynaecologies from Soranus and the redactors of Soranus. The slender scientific significance of the work is suggested by its relatively small circulation and by the apparent limit of its influence to some less celebrated members of the Bolognese school. *De formatione corporis* may well be the supreme example of rather distinctly clinical medicine accommodated within the confines of scholasticism, but Mr Hewson's account, in the chapters above, that he could have made this point without exhibiting so much of his working. Since his interest, moreover, is clearly in philosophy rather than medicine, his critique of Giles would probably have gained from a thematic treatment untethered by a structured commentary. The medical parallels, if explored to the same degree, would have brought home the extent of Giles's isolation from the empirical writings of his time.

The study is not improved by a number of stylistic and other irritations. Mr Hewson, assuming that the reader is familiar with scholastic sources, is allusive to the point of omitting references; this would be inexcusable even if such allusions were dependable, but there are several slips, especially in narrative detail, and it is sometimes hard to tell a blunder from a contention (e.g. the attribution of *De Secretis Mulierum* to Michael Scot). Occasionally there are unnecessary displays of latinity and secondary learning, while space and patience are wasted by repetition. The general editors have also let details escape. Inconsistencies abound in citation; the index is misleadingly disorganized, and has many partial and total omissions. Virtually redundant illustrations, shoddy casing, and end-of-chapter notes will not endear the book to the purchaser—regrettably, since the problems of structure and style do not obscure the usefulness of Mr Hewson's enthusiasm and learning.

Emancipating Matilda

By K. S. Inglis

BOB ENCEL, NORMAN MACKENZIE and MARJORIE TEBBUTT:
Women and Society An Australian Study
320pp. Melsby Press. £4.95.

EDNA RYAN and ANNE CONLON:
Gentle Invaders Australian Women at Work 1788-1974
196pp. Nelson. $A9.95.

When a book by three authors is said to be the second edition of a book by one of them, with a different title, we may expect the relationship between the two works to be uncomfortable. Norman MacKenzie's *Women in Australia*, published in 1962, was a latecomer in the line of books about Australia by English visitors, and one of the best. It was also a pioneering essay in Australian sociology, having been commissioned by the Social Science Research Council of Australia. Professor MacKenzie made clever use of historical sources, of such demographic and other contemporary material as he could find, and of his own sharp eyes and ears, to explore the place of women in a society where their political emancipation had come remarkably early and made remarkably little difference to their life. On this paradox and on much else, his study is illuminating.

His conclusion of 1962 now look very cautious, as if addressed to a nation of punchy men and meek women. Mild proposals—for the resemployment of older women, or for a Women's Bureau—are accompanied by assurances that they need not be rushed 'and need not cost much, and by an affirmation to which the author sounds like a witness in one of those Australian law courts so reluctant to admit women to serve on juries: "I wish to make it quite clear that nothing I have said should be taken as diminishing the social and emotional value of stable family life. . . ." Would that sentiment have survived if Professor MacKenzie had done his own second edition? If it had, we would surely have been given a less cool account of the new feminist literature than appears in the work now variously attributed to Encel, MacKenzie and Tebbutt.

Sol Encel's preface describes Margaret Tebbutt as a research assistant who became—or rather, whose "role became one of"—an indispensable collaborator. Encel himself is a professor of sociology who has contributed as much as any other scholar to the making, in the past fifteen years, of a thoroughly professional body of sociological writing about Australia. He tells us that the book incorporates much of the first one, but that Professor MacKenzie's part in the revision has been confined to making helpful comments and reading the final manuscript.

The authors between them have not read it carefully enough. One passage of the old book several sentences long turns up on two different pages of the new one, and there is much other material which, for no good reason appears twice. A reference to the present as "the middle of the twentieth century" is still there at the three-quarters mark. An advertising rule is quoted as saying: that all salesgirls are women when the context indicates that he must have said men.

Such blemishes could easily have been removed. There is, however, a deeper difference of character between the two works. Professor MacKenzie's perceptive "I" is replaced by a professional "we" which is apt to sound godlike even when acknowledging ignorance. Precise insights are inflated into generalities, as when a nice passage on Catholics and women is made to carry a load of Durkheimian theory about "religion" for which it was not designed. Wit is hampered by drops of sociologese. "They are not, however, mere bowers of cake and drawers of raffle tickets." Professor MacKenzie wrote approximately of women in voluntary organizations. This becomes "yet they play a much more important part than serving as bakers, etc, and a vivid world is thus removed. Argument, language, the style in which the sex of the population is [illegible]

[illegible] obtained.

offered two goals in life"—both to be wives and mothers and to compete with men in education and employment—"a situation so new that we are so far able to identify its causes much more clearly than we can propose social policies to deal with it". But over the page we are told: "The dual role of women is not a twentieth-century novelty." The first judgment was Professor MacKenzie's; the second is Professor Encel's. A reader seriously interested in the argument has to pore over both texts like a biblical scholar.

The book is valuable for reporting studies made since Professor MacKenzie's, some of them Professor Encel's own, and for describing changes in the society, such as a doubling in the proportion of married women at work between 1961 and 1971. The chapter on higher education is almost entirely new. There is little in either version about what female Australians do when they are not learning or working or voting or lobbying. We rarely glimpse the homes where most women still spend most of their lives. No publisher this year is likely to offer a book on women containing less about sex. MacKenzie's social history has undergone much less revision than his sociology, perhaps because historians have done less than sociologists to fill the gaps he noticed.

The new study appears to have been finished before Mr Whitlam gained office at the end of 1972, and then priced open to insert passages about the new government's flurry of initiatives. Legislation for maternity leave for officers of the federal service is reported in its proper place, the chapter on working wives. The chapter on women's pay has nothing on the spectacular intervention of the government, a few days after the election, in a case on equal pay before the Arbitration Commission. This is reported in the last chapter, "Women and the Future", which thus serves as both conclusion and stop-press.

Professor Encel shows some unease about how the book will be received by new feminists. At first, he says in the preface, he wished that a woman could be found to revise MacKenzie; but he convinced himself otherwise. "As the social role of women moves from the periphery to the centre of intellectual discourse, so it will cease to be a topic for women only." No doubt; but today's feminists are likelier to be irritated than soothed by such bland prophecy. It is not surprising that the search for a suitable woman failed. To some of the female writers in and out of Australia whose work Professor Encel discusses in an introductory chapter, collaborating with MacKenzie would have been the intellectual equivalent of sleeping with the enemy.

Gentle Invaders puts in some of the social history whose absence Professor MacKenzie noted. Edna Ryan and Anne Conlon's study of the struggle for equal pay overlaps with the account in *Women and Society* but has a different vantage-point. The authors prepared a submission which the Women's Electoral Lobby put to the Arbitration Commission in 1974 arguing that the principle of a national minimum wage should be extended from men to women. They and their allies won what the delighted authors call "a tremendous victory in principle as well as in fact". The book has too many merks of its origin to be easy reading, too many chunks quarried from earlier submissions and judgments for an advocate to throw at the bench; but the authors clearly know the work and the workers they are writing about, and know what they want. Happily the jacket is wrong to saying that the book is not an angry one: "It is a dreadful injustice", the authors declare, "that women have been considered invaders of the work place." They are sardonic collectors of remarks by male judges such as the definition of contraceptive products as "pernicious rubber goods".

Master beachcomber

By Christopher Lloyd

J. W. DAVIDSON:
Peter Dillon of Vanikoro
Edited by O. H. K. Spate
351pp. Oxford University Press. £11.75.

Peter Dillon called himself the "Chevalier of the South Seas" because he was made a chevalier of the Legion of Honour in recognition of his discovery of the place where the ships of La Pérouse were wrecked. The French explorer, the last of the great explorers of the age of Cook (if we discount d'Entrecasteaux, who was sent on a vain search for his predecessor), sailed from Botany Bay in 1788 and was never heard of again. As a result of an accidental change of course on a voyage to Fiji forty years later, Dillon came across some relics of the French expedition on the unobarted island of Vanikoro in the Santa Cruz group north of the New Hebrides. There were some axes, knives and forks, a silver spoon, a sword with a cross on the hilt, and some vague folk-memories of white men who had come ashore.

The late J. W. Davidson, professor of Pacific history at the Australian National University, made Dillon a personal hobby and devoted years to collecting material about him from early Australian newspapers and Colonial Office records. He died before *Peter Dillon of Vanikoro* was completed, and it was edited for the press by O. H. K. Spate.

Davidson had already written an appraisal of this rumbustious beachcomber in his *Pacific Portraits* (1970), so why did he devote a long book to a character of such secondary importance? Because, he said, of the interest of his life "as a mariner, as a writer, and as a participant in public affairs, reflecting the changes in the Pacific between the end of the age of exploration and the beginning of the age of empire".

The tall red-haired Irishman was certainly a good seaman, though life on board under his command seems to have been pretty violent. He broke his telescope over the head of his wife, threw a hatchet at the cabin boy and generally enveloped the brigs and schooners which he commanded in a cloud of foul language, when not fraternizing with Polynesian islanders or castigating Polynesian missionaries for their bigotry. The narrative which he published in 1829 to exploit the voyage on which he discovered the fate of La Pérouse contains much valuable ethnological material, as well as pieces of autobiography and lengthy unacknowledged borrowings from earlier writers such as James Burney and Will Mariner. To call him a participant in public affairs is stretching the truth: all Dillon was doing was trying to get himself a public appointment by bombarding the Colonial Office with letters and pamphlets urging the white settlement of New Zealand, in spite of his personal experience of Maori cannibals.

These efforts proved futile. Dillon's difficulty throughout life was a perpetual shortage of cash. His origins are obscure, though he seems to have been connected with the family which formed the famous Dillon Regiment and settled in Martinique, where he was born. He was brought up in Ireland and claimed to have fought at the battle of Trafalgar, though in what capacity is not clear. Something more definite is known about him when he became master of one of the East India Company's "country" ships, sailing to Fiji for sandalwood and across the Pacific two or three times. As a master mariner and beachcomber he got to know the Polynesian islanders well and was able to observe at first hand the deleterious effects of Protestant missionaries of native cultures. He hoped that his chance discovery of the fate of La Pérouse would make his fame and fortune. If he got back to London and Paris. But having received some encouragement from the French king, the July Revolution spoilt all his prospects. The last seventeen years of his life was a desperate struggle to make a living. No one would have been more surprised than Peter Dillon to have his name canonized, inscribed in so much detail as in this book.

TLS Commentary

New York's hard corps

By Julian Symons

Terri Hall, Jennifer Welles, Andrea True—these are names that in Britain don't make news. The films in which they appear, *The Story of Joanna*, *The Divine Obsession*, *Who Slew Scarlet?*, will not be seen at your local Roxy or Granada in the near future. They are, however, playing at a third, or perhaps a quarter, of Manhatten cinemas. And elsewhere too. Some of them will undoubtedly be coming to the small New England town in which I am living.

These films are hard-core pornography. And what is that? *The Village Voice* referred recently to a passage in *Shampoo* in which, as they rather coyly put it, Julie Christie expresses her desire to perform fellatio on Warren Beatty. But this is an more than a fragment of dialogue, and *Shampoo* is not a pornographic film. The character of hard-core pornography is that in it, to preserve Voicely terminology, fellatio, ordinary copulation, cunnilingus and buggery are shown on the screen. If the films I have seen are characteristic, they appear roughly in that order of frequency. There is a certain amount of sado-masochism but, in the films I saw, no bestiality. Nor are the films exactly brutal—everything in them, including torture, is presented as a game enjoyed by everybody. Films showing women copulating with dogs, and fellating other animals, can be seen in New York peepshows but not, so far as I know, in cinemas.

These films have been very little written about. Most of those who have discussed them seem to agree with the theatre and film critic Julian Simon that "as a method of arousal, film, which is generally seen in a darkened, distinctive chain of sensation, is a powerful medium." The immediate effect of seeing on a cinema screen people participating in acts that for most of us take place in private is strongly arousing. But the effect does not last long. Once the shock has worn off, the endless succession of genitals replacing each other on the screen becomes tedious. Such a feeling may not, of course, be shared by everybody. The audience at the films I saw varied with the time of viewing, from a few men in the morning to an audience of a hundred or more in the evening. About a quarter of the evening audiences were women, some young and some middle-aged, in the company of men. Are they excited by the films? No sign of emotion is shown when the lights go up, but then one would hardly expect such a sign. Do they emulate in private the activities they see watching? There is no evidence either way. Gerald Damiano, the principal hard-core film director, acknowledges the tedium of films devoted wholly to sexual activities but, as he says, the audience must get something out of it.

About the tedium, judged by our ordinary standards, there is no question. The basic reason for it is that the films are dehumanized. Their heroes and heroines are the genitals, not the players. In them King Penis triumphs eternally, with Lady Vagina by his side. Occasionally the male partner is given a name, but the actors are chosen for their ability to service several men at a time. The fact that most of these players are incapable of speaking a single line with the fluency expected of a first year student. Their genitals act for them. Nor does it matter that very few of the women are particularly attractive. They are not on the screen to attract, but to perform.

It is the explicitness of the hard-core film that makes it artistically null. Absolute literalness is thought to be what the audience requires, and accordingly copulation must never end inside the orifice where the penis is placed. The sperm must be seen on screen and in this one case it is always an interruption, with what one feels must be unsatisfactory results. With rare exceptions of this sort, hardcore films are simply a thing but rubbish? It is possible, in theory, to imagine a hard-core film made from Beardsley's *Under The Hill* which might be a work of art. Again in theory, a hard-core film might be wittily and intelligently scripted, say by Terry Southern. In practice, however, this is an impossibility, because such films would require a talent, a discretion, a subtlety, which are non-existent in the hard-core industry. Nor is it by any means certain that they would be commercially successful. If King Penis was off screen during most of the picture, would the same audience come to watch?

Some of this is realized by Damiano, who made *Deep Throat*, *The Devil in Miss Jones* and *The Story of Joanna*, which is at present doing very good business in New York. He complains, rightly enough, that his actors cannot act, but it is also true that the stories created for them are the feeblest bits of mock diabolism or Gothic gloom. In *The Story of Joanna* the immensely rich hero is suffering from some unspecified fatal illness. For this reason (well, for some reason) he is unable to love Joanna, but he takes it on himself to educate her in obedience. "Why do yew meka me do this, I lurv ysw", Joanna whines, while accommodating the King Penises of her lover's friends, and even of his butler. Yes, there is a butler, it is that kind of film. In the end Joanna despatches Jason at his request, with one of his antique pistols, and then tells the butler: "Dinner will be served at the same time as usual." And surely she'll ask some of the boys over, for a sex party around the corpse?

When one considers that *The Story of Joanna* is possibly the best film of its kind, the general level will be understood. Most of the films I saw had no story, other than that of a wife taking on the hired help (two of them, of course) while her husband is away. *Who Slew Scarlet?* is a sexual whodunit in which the sex is the only thing that matters. Curiously, or perhaps it is not curious, soft-core porn seems very tame after the reel thing. In *The Story of O*, King Penis never rears his head, and the camera starts away from the touch of the ivory on the heroine as though the cameramen had suddenly trodden on a virgin. The result is to make the film of this "classic" of sado-masochism as dismally sentimental as the book.

Really, I preferred *The Story of Joanna*.

That is the phenomenon of hard-core pornography, seen during a hard week. What does it mean? The cinema has always been a dream factory, but what is the meaning of these particular dreams? Why are the films so popular? In fact, they are not. None of the cinemas I went to was full. But they are very cheap to make, interest in them is steady, making and distributing them is using your licence to print money. The underworld is now largely in control of distribution. The *New York Times*, in two articles a few months ago, discussed in detail the links between the Mafia and the hard-core porn industry.

But it is the social implications of these films that give them their importance. There are a good many male homosexual films, and some lesbian scenes, but the overwhelming mass of them show women merely as a receptacle for male sperm. Male dominance and female subservience is a continuous theme, and the emphasis is on womenly enjoyment of a submissive role. In one film a girl who is tied up and whipped has to beg that she should be whipped more. By asking for the whip she is showing her love for her master. And his love for her? That, of course, is shown by domination, as he first whips and then buggers her.

Should these films be freely shown in London as they are in New York, where their titles gleam in bright lights beside those showing *The Man Who Would be King* and *Three Days of the Condor*? It seems at first thought surprising that supporters of Women's Lib, who are so endlessly vocal about so many unimportant things, have had nothing to say about the extreme male chauvinism of recent pornography. No doubt, however, their Women's Lib feelings are submerged beneath their opposition to censorship. Freedom must be good, surely? Whatever may be the ethical code of hard-core pornography, an extra little dose of freedom can't do us any harm? It is not easy to discuss, the present liberal intellectual attitude to pornography, in which Women's Lib plays a characteristic although minor part, without becoming a hostage to the Whitehousiens, but one ought to try.

The liberal attitude to pornography in both Britain and America seems to me dishonest and stupid. It is dishonest because it makes no differentiation between *Fanny Hill* and *Women Slaves of the Nazis* (to invented title, but there are many like it), and stupid because those who take it as axiomatic that total freedom must be a total good do not realize the implications of what they are saying.

One reads with disbelief some of the evidence given in recent British cases, like that of the genital doctor who says that pictures of torture are therapeutic because they may lead to masturbation, or of Miss Boyars who says that she cannot disapprove of buggery in books because "these things happen". Perhaps they might be less complacent about films than about books. There is a difference certainly, for films are fantasy made real and there is pressure all the time for the fantasy to become crudar, especially in relation to sadistic violence. There is a publicity story about a new film, soon to be released in America, to the effect that the people shown as dead in it were actually killed—these are real corpses you are seeing. Just a publicity story? Perhaps, but the point is that the film is expected to do tremendous business because of it. Do we disapprove? After all, these things happen!

It is likely that before long hard-core films will be showing torture scenes which attract because they are, or seem to be, real. What would a believer in total freedom say about such scenes under interrogation?

COUNSEL: In this scene a man is forcing a bottle up a woman's vagina. Do you approve of that?

WITNESS: It isn't a practice I care for myself, but perhaps she enjoys it.

COUNSEL: And here is a woman receiving electric shocks on her genitals, and writhing in anguish. What do you say about that?

WITNESS: It's my impression that she was acting. I doubt if the current was switched on.

Such an imaginary scene is only an extreme extension of what has been going on in British courts lately.

The assumption made by those in favour of total freedom from censorship is that the freedom will be responsibly handled. And often it is. The later books of Anthony Powell's novel sequence *A Dance to the Music of Time* show the way in which the freedoms available in the last few years can be discreetly and beneficially used. On another level, a book like *Portnoy's Complaint* could not have been written until a few years ago. Many films have used intelligently the freedom to show sexual scenes. And of course it was inevitable when sexual and social mores have changed so fast, that what is permissible to see and say should have changed also. The absurdity of the Whitehouse case rests in the assumption that pornography is a cause, rather than an effect. They think that if you pass a law forbidding (say) the use of the word "fuck" in print, you will have done something beneficial to society. On the contrary, "fuck" is used in print because it is now commonly used in society. King Penis is the playboy of the Western world. He cannot be kept, so the Whitehouse lans would wish, permanently buttoned up.

And yet it remains true that for intellectuals to say that he should be totally free is a negation of the values of the mind that they should represent. Nothing at all will be lost if the films I have been discussing are not made freely available in Britain. They are of no particular importance in themselves, and no individual is likely to be corrupted by watching them, but they represent nothing good in American or any society. The freedom they offer is a freedom to degrade. Liberal intellectuals should recognize also that nothing they care about, or should care about, is gained by going into the winner box and conducting ingenious fencing bouts with counsel in support of worthless books. Such activities also degrade the intellect, and support the philistine. They put *Moll Flanders* on a level with *Fanny Hill*. Lawrence Squeers Bignell with Damiano. Intellectuals should have standards of value, and should adhere to them. To abandon those standards is a true treason of the clerks.

Fossils and bustles

The Oleander Press (17 Stansgate Avenue, Cambridge) offers an interesting list of titles on the industrial archaeology of the region; the bridges of the Cam, early railways and now Richard Grove's *The Cambridgeshire Coprolite Mining Rush* (51pp, illustrated, £1.20) which describes a curious and widely forgotten episode.

As the name suggests, coprolitic nodules were first thought to be fossilized excrement, a notion which gave rise to speculation about the animals responsible. The fossils were mostly ammonites, other molluscs, or coralloids of much the material was nearly pure calcium phosphate which, washed, ground and treated with acid, formed an exceedingly valuable fertiliser. In many parts of Cambridgeshire the beds are very close to the surface, and Mr Grove speculates that the first exploiter, one John Ball of Burwell, may have noticed the effect on his crops, but even before this Hamilton had suggested to the British Association that the material might be rich enough to be worked.

Bella scale took place in 1851, and by the end of the decade the chemical facilities for processing had developed, and ships were being loaded at Cambridge quays. Prices were high, and many to be made from the business. Really, it looked like a gold rush. Speculators, migrant workers, light railways, improved canals, new roads followed. In the boom years of 1874-75, annual production was a quarter of a million tons; Ipswich flourished, shipping cargoes worldwide. The work was hard, well paid and dangerous; in 1875 the Home Office inspectors reported "the extreme carelessness of the men themselves". At Upware there was an annual carnival, "the Bustle", where much locally produced mead was drunk.

The decline came fast; coprolite could not compete in the overseas markets with New Jersey phosphates, Chilean nitrate or guano. Purported fossil excrement lost out to genuine bird-droppings. The more accessible local beds were worked out, the richest deposits underlie the city of Cambridge, untouched save for some workings where Mill Hill stands today. By 1898 the last surviving pit was lost in a fall of roof; today there is nothing left but a Charles Street near Ipswich docks, a few earthworks, field markings and the unprofitable purchase of a worthless form of fertilizer.

TLS Commentary

TWO POEMS BY LES MURRAY

The Euchre Game

So drunk he kept it at tens—and the bloody thing lost!
He bought a farm out of that. Round the battered formica
table the talk is luck more than justice, justice
being the politics of a small child's outcry.

The sublest eyes in the Southern Hemisphere look at
the cards in front of them. Well I'll go alone.
Outside the window, passionfruit flowers are blooming
single together. Many are not in the sun.

Men lose a trick, deal a fresh hand. Intelligence here
is interest, and the refusal of relegation;
those who believe it change-fixed to their benefit also
believe in justice. Some of them are what remains of

the Revolution. Hey, was that far us? Footsteps
recede down the hall. One looks at the window, three smile:
Europeans! You're all suffering-snobs. Who's away?
The game's loosely sacred: luck is being worked at.

The New Expatriation

Written for John Kerr on the night of Australia Day 1976

A tethered boat, shifting,
bumps against a pile
down there in the dark. Its rope
being a length I know well,
I count off the slack drift, the pull
and the thumping back to bump
again, that accounted pole.

To be a foreigner
once again. For a while.
Not quite like one mourning
Petersburg, or Natal:
more like one riding up
toward the higher villages
in snow-light, through leaf-fall,

reinventing oneself
in a dense new language,
or feeding the languages off,
letting them stay music,
remembering always to speak
in Standard English,
never being provincial—

because, back home, waiting
for the Republic is like waiting
for the other boat to drop.
And who knows if dignity
won't be like obeisance,
robes worn above a shop.
At first, it may well.

Now the tide's out
some things will be thinking they
have climbed quite high, up
the remaining sound pile
where the boat, now still, rides
horizontally hanging
in the dark down there.

Three girls in a box

By Lorna Sage

So many people and things have got to come right at once to make good television that it is a kind of minor miracle when it happens—when writers, directors, actors and all blissfully collide instead of fudging together in the routine way. *Rock Follies* (Thames) was just such a firework show: the best series for ages, brief enough to be missed, long enough for its rhythms and images to linger on like a taste in the head. Usually, the fun of watching television derives from the moonstruck shallowness of its images—the way actors walk out of one cop-slot into another without even bothering to change their shirts, the gloss on Angie Dickinson's chaokbones—because that slickness is more interesting (and more disturbing in the end) than the lifeless awkwardness of serious studio drama—and in my view people who think otherwise probably do not really like television anyway. Just occasionally (as in *Rock Follies*) the unexpected takes over, and you get the exhilarating feeling that everyone concerned (Howard Schuman the writer, Julia Covington, Rula Lenske and Charlotte Cornwell the "Little Ladies", Jon Scoffield and Brian Farnham the directors) has emerged not just intact, but with an enhanced identity and personal style. It can be done.

TV Times says ("Rock musical packs a message") that Howard Schuman is an expatriot American (sic), which is hard to believe. His scripts, at any rate, were a glorious cosmopolitan mishmash of manners and jargons, from the amoebic commune ("the house has been losing energy") to trend-taster ("There's going to be an elegance backlash") to middle-class Anna's would-be liberated wail: "Just let the vinaigrette drip, Mother". It is not merely that the people the Little Ladies tangled with on the way to stardom were farcically recognizable (Stavros Kuklas the Greek millionaire, Juan les Pins the nightclub manager, Chas Speed the blue movie maker) but that they spoke in a language that was self-generating, a kind of inspired self-parody. No character, however flat, was without some perverted creative energy, and than again, no one got away with straight talking. For long, not even Dee (Julie Covington) who was most to be believed. And as a result, the unreal world they lived in gathered conviction—every absurd proposition had an air of plausibility. Their confusions and false starts did not seem stupid: Mr Schuman's "message" bypassed the simple rain of exploitation (talent prostituted for cash). His version of rock is rooted in fantasy riches and "incredible highs", feeling and faking hopelessly intertwined, as in the bastard idioms that surround it.

The directors seem to have caught the same tone of ironic wonder—the camera keeps a quizzical distance, allowing people to sell themselves silly, while conjuring for the big numbers the "real" spectacle of the blandest pop promotions. This way, the whole show balanced directly between satric fiction and confidence trick (the actual launching of the group, the LP of the songs, etc). When it comes down to it, television directors and designers can be perfectly well aware of their medium's treachery, though most of the time they feign innocence. Not that Rock *Follies* turned boringly self-conscious; but the malicious suggestions that the fiction would spawn fact added zest to the series, a teasing question mark hanging over the end. And whether or not the single that has been issued makes its way into the charts, it can hardly avoid fulfilling the programme's predictions about the sticky nature of success.

The people who will bear the brunt, either way, are the three Ladies themselves: their exploitation of the powers and limitations of their talents as actresses, sex objects, singers, proved the most extraordinary part of the show's unpredictable chemistry. It wasn't so much that they mastered their roles well; rather, the roles changed them, subtly, with their own personalities and careers.

However this was done the sense sinister prescience in the writing, or by visionary casting) it gave a dimension of pathos to their witty, speeded-up television progress. Their slightly sticky conviction of having "something" was pitted with beautiful accuracy against their inevitable humiliations at the hands of the image-merchants. Inevitable because (to return to the message) rock is to do with mass communication, and with the special thrill of amplified, multiplied sensations, so it is impossible to survive without the bankers and the promoters. The trick is to get what you want, and what they want, to coincide, and the last episode left the Little Ladies as far from that as ever, peddling nostalgia ("Glenn Miller is missing/Why do I feel so old . . . ?"), losing touch with old lovers, not finding new ones, back at the bottom of the stairs. It wasn't really an ending, of course: though the songs got gradually worse, they were still good-bad songs (disillusioned tunes by Andy Mackay of Roxy Music), and though the women got more tired, their determination to survive seemed (as they would say) gritter still. The question now is whether there will be a sequel, and if so whether everyone involved can make it again, given the odds they all know so well.

Alternative energy

Five years ago three London theatre fanatics began publishing *Theatre Quarterly* as a successor to the lamented *Encore* and a counterpart to *TDR* and *Performance* in the United States. Though its interests have ranged widely, its particular strength has lain in its substantial "Casebooks" on productions, its interviews with playwrights (in the current double issue John McGrath and David Hare), and its very full booklists and chronologies, which were eventually hived off to form a separate publication called *Theatrefacts*. For three years Eyre Methuen backed the magazine and handled its distribution, building up a subscription list of 2,300 and a bookshop sale of about 1,500 per issue. In the summer of 1973, with annual losses running at some £3,000, the publishers demanded a number of changes, starting with the doubling of the cover price. The editors chose instead to appeal for guarantees from a number of their theatrical supporters, and went independent.

In their first fourteen months they lost £7,328: each copy cost £1.30 to produce and was sold to the public for 80p. In 1975 they started typesetting the magazine themselves, reorganized the subscription system and more than doubled their cover price. They had counted on losing 20 per cent of their subscribers; instead they gained 2 per cent. Meanwhile they teamed up with a small printing cooperative formed originally to earn the administration expenses of the Institute for Research in Art and Technology, an offshoot of the old Arts Lab. This unit of eighteen members is housed in a once derelict building belonging to Camden Council, and plus one medium-sized and five small offset machines, two IBM composers and some strikes on equipment on which theatre posters are printed. The editors themselves now do composition and paste-ups; distribution is arranged from the basement; the subscriptions are handled by the School of English at the University of East Anglia. The difference between this and more orthodox (and costly) production methods is scarcely visible to the layman; and the magazine's debts have been paid off.

They have had small grants from the Arts Council and from the Gulbenkian Foundation, and are hoping that the latter will help them to buy the two IBM composers, which cost £300 a month to rent; they also need a finishing and binding machine. But to a great extent they have raised themselves from the red by their own bootstraps. The effect on morale is obvious, not least from the current number, which tackles the problems of the "alternative" theatre (edited from a refreshingly different points of view, but with a new energy and excitement.

To the Editor

Wordsworth

Sir,—A statement in Jonathan Wordsworth's instructive review of Mark L. Reed's second instalment of the Wordsworth *Chronology* (March 26) requires a mild correction. Referring to his eminent ancestor's "love" of his sister Mr Wordsworth tells us that we "cannot know to what extent this love kind (or was acknowledged to have) a sexual basis". But can't we? And if not why not? Some twenty years ago—when I took Wordsworth's poetry rather more seriously than I find I can today—I called the attention of the Dove Cottage Trustees to the many deletions in Dorothy's Grasmere Journal and suggested that the British Museum might apply recent refinements of infrared photography to their decipherings.

My suggestion was not exactly welcomed by the trustees, who cleverly outflanked scandalous revelations. They were then, I am told, principally members of the Wordsworth family reinforced by a few well-heeled local residents, but they did include two or three academics. And it was one of the academics (F. P. Wilson probably) who printed not that if my request was refused I would be sure to write a pungent letter to the "Lit Supp", as we called you at that time. This awful probability finally persuaded the trustees to give a reluctant agreement.

Instead of the British Museum's photographers, however, Helen Derbishire undertook to decipher the deletions single-handed and by the light of nature. Her method, she once told me, was to hold up each page against a window and there subject the crossings-out to a prolonged scrutiny. Her edition of the *Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth* (1958) is no doubt a partial vindication of this "method". A fair number of the deletions have been [illegible] was made to distinguish what was from what was not crossed out or the degrees of the former's legibility—e.g., by square brackets, question marks or dots. Some of the more "sensitive" passages are a particular sufferance.

An example occurs in the entry for January 26, 1802. As printed in 1952 by de Selincourt, who ignored any deletion, a sentence reads "We sate till we were both tired". In Miss Derbishire's edition this became "We sate nicely together & roasted by the fire, till we were both tired", the words I have italicized representing a deletion in the manuscript. But why should anyone, however prim, have felt it necessary to excise those seven words? In the entry for the following Sunday (January 31), "I persuaded him on the corner" was apparently considered insufficiently "delicate". My own hurried reading of the passage, made some years before Miss Darbishire's was perfected and ran "We sate [nicely together & talked by the fire] till we were both tired". The final sentence, which was not cancelled either by Dorothy or a Victorian family censor, of the entry for the day is indicated; "Wm. wrote to Annette." Perhaps the fireside chat was not quite as cosy as Miss Derbishire's version makes it sound. Add in any case there are some words at the end of the deleted passage which were simply ignored, not even carrying excision dots.

And there are some other passages, all ignored by Miss Darbishire, that have been crossed out so thoroughly that no amount of window-gazing can possibly decipher them. Somebody, it seems, was exceptionally anxious to conceal something. Whether it was the incest in the fullest physical sense Shelley suspected, or no more than sororal "petting", as is possible, the facts that Jonathan Wordsworth "cannot know" are almost certainly lurking in those illegible deletions. The ink incidentally in which they were made is black and not Dorothy's usual green.

The Yale editors of Johnson's *Diaries, Prayers, and Annals* (1958), finding deletions and obliterations that they could not decipher, sensibly turned for help to the Eastman Kodak Company of Rochester (NY), who by the use of infra-red photographs or an infra-red converter were able to read words and phrases that Johnson must have thought he had made impenetrable by posterity. In his case, characteristically, all that was revealed were minor stylistic defects in the first draft. Dorothy too was not above occasional improvements of this kind, but they are all easy to read. It is the total or almost total deletions that present the challenge that Wordsworthian scholarship has—to the best of my knowledge—so far evaded or deferred.

I am not issuing an invitation to muck-rakers. On the contrary the best of Wordsworth's poetry is directly or indirectly autobiographical. And, as Jonathan Wordsworth is fully aware, Dorothy was much the most important single external influence in his life. We cannot be satisfied indefinitely with the bowdlerized transcription of the Grasmere Journal provided by Helen Derbishire. Are there no academics still left among the Dove Cottage Trustees?

[illegible]
Brill, Bucks HP18 9SX.

David Jones

Sir,—Not long before his death in a nursing home in October 1974, I suggested to David Jones that his wood-engravings for *The Chester Play of the Deluge* should be reprinted, with the text, at the Rampant Lions Press, Cambridge, for publication by Clover Hill Editions. The wood-blocks were originally printed at the Golden Cockerel Press on undamped paper, and their delicacy, to David Jones's bitter disappointment, was lost; so he readily agreed to my proposal. A trusted friend searched his chatsard bud-sitter, but could find only eight of the ten wood-blocks.

Further inquiries have failed to track down the missing two ("Animals going into the Ark", and "The Drowning of the Wicked"). They may perhaps have been lent for some purpose to an editor, publisher, printer of personal friend. *Faute de mieux* lithe-blocks could be made from the artist's proofs; but if any *TLS* reader could provide some clue to the present location of two wood-blocks I should be extremely grateful.

DOUGLAS CLEVERDON.
The Clover Hill Editions Ltd, [illegible]

'Operation Menace'

Sir,—When Arthur Marder writes (March 26) that the only papers I ever showed him were "a valuable Jutland set . . . a dozen years and five books ago" his memory is extraordinarily abbreviated. My copies of Volumes 4 and 5 of his *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow* (1969 and 1972) are inscribed in his hand "with very warm thanks" (adverb double underlined); I have in front of me a receipt signed by him "with sincere thanks" for copies of documents sent to him on June 11, 1973; and on his last visit to this college I put out for him the copy of Admiral Sir Ralph Edwards's diary covering the Norwegian campaign of 1940 (without request in order to show him that the statement that I had quoted from it "with extreme inaccuracy" (*Dardanelles to Oron*, page 171) was wholly unjustified. I have in fact over the years put in more work for Professor Marder than for any of the scores of other historians who have come to me for help or advice, and the only thing I have ever refused him is permission to publish long extracts from the diary of the first Lord Hankey which I, who had been appointed his authorized biographer, was about to use in my *Hankey, Man of Secrets*, Volume 1 (1970). Presumably this is the "very disagreeable experience" to which he refers. His very rude letters to me on that score certainly were disagreeable, and I expect my replies were equally so in his eyes. As I shall be dealing in full with the "evidence" cited in Marder's last two books in a work called *Churchill and the Admirals* on which I am now engaged I will take up no more of your space on that matter.

S. W. ROSKILL.
Churchill College, Cambridge.

Within Those Walls

Sir,—The honour of being mistaken by F. E. Smith for a public lavatory belongs to the National Liberal Club and not as E. S. Turner suggests to the Athenaeum (April 2).

An inspection of the internal and external architecture of this former club will show that the latter and consideration of its "convenience" location between The Temple and the Commons would I think make this clear.

TIM BEAUMONT.
(Lord Beaumont of Whitley)
National Liberal Club.

Harry Wolfson

Sir,—As one who had the good fortune to study with Harry Wolfson, I read Leon Wieseltier's review of the first volume of his collected studies (March 19) with feelings of nostalgia and sympathy, but same disappointment. With Mr Wieseltier's praise of Wolfson's "fastidious scholarship" and the scope of his research I have no quarrel. But a number of Mr Wieseltier's comments seem to me to distort the nature of Wolfson's aims and accomplishments, others to give a skewed impression of the boundaries within which his vision operated.

To the best of my knowledge, Wolfson never claimed, as Mr Wieseltier suggests, that "philosophy proper . . . attained full maturity . . . with Philo". Together with Spinoza, Philo was one of Wolfson's chief heroes, but the two held the positions they did because he saw them as the alpha and omega of the period he made his own, the centuries when religion and philosophy operated in concert. Before encountering Wolfson, many of us may have followed Gilson in attributing to Augustine responsibility "for the inauguration of the tradition for which reason and revelation were complementary sources of truth". But after Wolfson, we could not accept a line of descent which omitted the Gospels and Epistles, the Apostolic Fathers, the Apologists, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, but, above all, Philo. No more, Wolfson convinced us, would Augustine have done so.

Wolfson, I think, would have smiled to hear that he had "truncated the history of philosophy by medievalizing it". Without prejudice to what precedes or followed, he simply chose to concentrate on a carefully delimited period, the era between ancient and modern when philosophy was rewritten in terms of religion. With his prodigious command of languages and sources, he explored the interrelationships of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish philosophy in that period, and whatever light his research shed on earlier and later time was accidentally generated. Wieseltier would not, I believe, have been equally amused to see his double faith theory defined as "the philosophical omelettum of reason and revelation". The harmonization of religion and philosophy was indeed his central theme, but he often reminded us that those who adhered to the double faith theory, as well as those devoted to one of the single faith theories, were united in their belief in the possibility of achieving such harmonization—it not in the value they accorded the enterprise.

But what of the effect of Wolfson's character and of his personal beliefs on his work? Here Mr Wieseltier comes closer to the mark, although he seems to me to exaggerate the influence of Wolfson's Judaism on his research. Philo and Spinoza were important to him not as Jews, but as seminal thinkers, and it was the time they linked Muslim, Jewish, and Christian thought in his period, not the centrality of the Jewish tradition", that he emphasized as a scholar, he attempted to measure the semo etendards of objectivity on which he insisted in the classroom. Once he halted a lengthy discussion of predestination by proclaiming, benevolently but firmly: "My friends, this is not a religious debating society." More than once he cautioned, "In this class we leave our beliefs at the door".

ELIZABETH A. R. BROWN
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Hopefully

Sir,—Your correspondent Mr Steiner's argument (March 26) can be taken further. She rightly says "Clearly he will come" means "it is clear that he will come". The former may be less grammatical, but it is equally clear and more economical. "Hopefully he will come" means "I hope he will come" or "It is to be hoped that he will come"; or, suspiciously, something vaguer. If no ambiguity is intended, why not the more economical "I hope he will come"? Because hopefully, if you have said "Hopefully he will come", and he comes, you can say "I told you so"; if he does not, you can say "I said it was a pious hope". But if you find yourself accused of bad grammar, you have at least enjoyed the more serious charge of emptiness. The issue is a moral one, as *The Times* might say.

JAMES OGDEN
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The Great Wall

Sir,—I much appreciated your review of my *The Great Wall of China* (February 27), but find it a little hard that the one adverse criticism highlighted was that there are "unfortunately none of Anne Stein's illustrations of the almost vanished western section". There are, in fact, two of Stein's photos in the book, perfectly clearly attributed. I agree with the reviewer that to omit them would have been a sad state of affairs.

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Graham Greene

Sir,—In Commentary (March 26) you complain that the numbering of the volumes in the Collected Edition of Graham Greene's novels appears only on the dust-jackets. The numbers are, in fact, printed prominently on the half-title of all volumes.

EUAN CAMERON
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Among this week's contributors

CORAL BELL is Professor of International Relations at the University of Sussex.

MORTON BLOOMFIELD is the editor of *The Interpretation of Narrative: Theory and Practice*, 1971.

M. C. BRADBROOK's most recent book is *Malcolm Lowry*, 1974.

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ROGER FULFORD's recent books include *Samuel Whitbread*, 1967 and *The Trial of Queen Caroline*, 1967.

WARWICK GOULD is a Lecturer in English at the University of London [illegible] *Yeats: Poetry, Politics, History*, 1973.

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BERNARD SMITH's books include *Australian Painting*, 1962 and *The Antipodean Manifesto*, 1975.

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From left to right: David Campbell, Tom Shapcott, Les Murray, Francis Webb.

Breaking the tribal bounds

By Peter Porter

The advent of Queensland University Press into Australian publishing can be seen as a great boon to Australian poets, but also as a sign to the rest of the world that modern poetry in English includes a new territory of achievement, at once excellently presented and properly signposted. Alas, so far I have detected little evidence that British and American readers are aware of the poetry being written in Australia today: familiarity even with names hardly goes beyond Judith Wright, A. D. Hope and, perhaps, the late Francis Webb. The wave of new poets, the adventurous policy of the UQP, and the support of the Australian Government for contemporary writing all coincided at the start of the decade, and can be thought of as belonging to a hopeful phase of Australian nationalism which may already be passing.

It's worth pointing out that this new nationalism differs from the various sorts which Australia produced in the past—from the apparently radical but in fact xenophobic comradeship of Henry Lawson's generation, and also from the self-consciously adopted totemism of the Jindyworobak poets of the late 1930s. It has no pattern beyond an obvious comfort in Australia itself, a recognition of the Australian scene as potentially as poetic as any other and, more importantly, the Australian mind as being licensed to explore any area of the imagination which the English language can cope with. In Britain or America, such a statement would be a resounding truism; but Australian nationalism in the past frowned on its poets competing in world markets. Stick to the local flora and fauna and to the quiddities of the Australian character was for generations a commonplace. The paradox of the present-day situation (and all the poets reviewed later in this article illustrate my point) is that, though they are very conscious of being Australian, the new poets feel entirely free to write about any subject under the sun and to adopt or adapt any mode of expression from overseas which attracts them. In my childhood, it was not unusual to find local writers who were extremely knowledgeable about the latest developments in England and America, but felt themselves excluded from any emulation of this. Impressed them, Australians being allowed only to follow a narrow traditionalism of their own. I do not imply that Australian poets are coming of age by trying to be like Europeans or Americans—one of the most agreeable signs of the health of modern poetry in Australia is the creation of styles *sui generis*, seen most convincingly in the work of Les Murray, and, among the poets reviewed here, in David Campbell—but that individual talent is no longer being cramped by the requirements "of national demolitication.

Unfortunately, Australia's success in poetry does not seem to be exportable. Of course, every English-speaking country is in a balance-of-payments deficit with the United States in this matter: Australians are almost as ignorant of contemporary British poetry as the British are of Australian. Ninety per cent of the poets of the English-speaking world prefer Harry are imitators of American models, and the younger Australians are no exceptions. But the independence of Australian publishing has had an unexpected and unfortunate effect on the dissemination of Australian poetry in the United Kingdom. While Australian authors were still in a colonial position, a Melbourne or Sydney poet could expect his book to be issued in the United Kingdom by his English-based publisher, or by Angus and Robertson through their London branch. But the new Australian imprints cannot sell their books to English publishing houses, and have to rely on agents to distribute the Australian editions in Britain. The booksellers do not stock them, the literary editors do not send them for review (supposing they have received a copies) and the reviewers and the public at large are nothing of them. Good poetry is not news in the way that Barry Humphries's inventions are. I mean no criticism of Humphries, whom I take to be a genius, but only wish to stress the hard facts of reputation-making in a world of shrinking options.

The new Australian drama gets noticed because the theatre looks after itself and radio and television are hungry for material. Yet, there is no comparison in achievement between the best Australian poets and dramatists: the poets are creating an original landscape of the imagination, while the dramatists are decorating Neil Simon Broadway successes, with Melbourne and Sydney place names and some of the cruder bits of Shaw. David Williamson and Alexander Buzo are treated at home like Ibsen and Strindberg, and are over-estimated abroad, while poets such as Les Murray, Roger McDonald and Tom Shapcott are hardly celebrities in their own country and are ignored overseas.

It is rather late to try to remedy this neglect in one piece in the *TLS*, which must also review a formidable collection of books. But if the work of these poets, and of more than a dozen others, finds its way into English public libraries a start will have been made. The Australian avant-garde—represented by, say, Kris Hemensley and such magazines as *The Bur in the Wheatfield* in Melbourne, or Robert Adamson and the Duncanfonclers of Sydney—is nearly indistinguishable from the avant-garde in Britain. At a conference at Macquarie University last year, the young poets challenged any notion of an Australian style in verse—this continent. This is a characteristic Australian form—explorers and pioneers have always been treated in a mystical way in Australian literature. What made Webb's versions different was his concern for the tensions of his characters' minds rather than the narrative of their deeds. He was taken up by the *Bulletin* Red Page in the 1940s, as his style, though heavily impressed, was sufficiently direct to gain him many readers. An early poem, "Middle Harbour", however, points to the direction Webb's talent was to take. The Browning technique of dramatic monologue stayed with him all his life, but the verse itself became increasingly knotted and allusive.

Yet, Webb, never secure "modern", not even in his last poems. The connections and the counterpoints are there—there are no non sequiturs. He has been likened to Lowell and even credited with learning from him. But Webb belongs more to an older school of poetry, to a discipline which commands that every poem be shaped by rational argument, almost like a sermon. In his sequence based on St Francis of Assisi, in the poems collected under the title *Around Costorgia*, and in the lament for Justi Bjerling, "Nossun Dorma," he composes dramatic lyrics which are as charged with super-rational intensity as any by Lowell, Galway Kinnell or Ted Hughes, but which keep to the cadences and metric of traditional English verse. Webb's heroic intention of never surrendering received form makes his poems uneasy, to my ear. In the *Poetry Australia* commemorative number, Craig Powell quotes what Webb told him in hospital, that his life was chaos and horror, but that he had tried to create order and beauty in his poems. The heroism has not necessarily helped the poems: age feels that there is another and almost certainly more extreme poem behind each of his Browningesque shells.

However, most of the contributors to the Webb number would not agree with me—they see his poetry as unqualified triumph. The most impressive article is by A. D. Hope, who begins by admitting that for years he doubted Webb's method of writing poems. He then gives a brilliant close analysis of two poems "Cenobolae" and "Going Free", both the products of Webb's confinement in Ocunge Mental Hospital, explaining the apparent obscurity in each is due to Webb's employment of a private language of reference—an obscurity which vanishes when the right facts are find in Webb died in 1973 at the age of forty-eight. His death marks the end of a phase of Australian poetry—perhaps it might be called the Old Believers' era. His work is sombre and poignant and written with complete conviction. He is already a hero, in the mould of his chosen exemplars. If I remain sceptical of the highest claims made for him, it is because I find his versification heavy-footed and his style overreliant on metaphor. But his power cannot be gainsaid.

David Campbell is probably the most loved and respected of the older generation of poets in Australia. This is due, as much as anything, to his lyricism. His work is consistently beautiful in structure and sound, and always true to the principles of season. Campbell is one of the few poets who satisfies the basic Australian hunger for a poetry of nature and the bush, without leaving behind his intelligence and his awareness of the late hour we live in. Recently, he has been in contact more with younger poets and his new book contains a few forays into looser and more spastic forms. These are not the best poems in the collection. The long series on pictures by masters, though it abounds in fine phrases, is too disjointed to succeed, and does not compensate by exhibiting any special insight into the iconography of the paintings. It comments on. In his short lyrics bound to station life in south-western New South Wales Campbell scores time and time again. In "Fairy Martins" for instance, he celebrates the birds' King Duncan observed on Macbeth's castle, showing them clues as much at home in the creeks and tanks of the Australian bush.

Always expatriate,
They live for the day,
Flitting a little tipsily,
Kissing their image in the mirror
Of lakes and ruffled dams.

* * *

They are not political
Like Macbeth,
Have no none of Duncan's death;
Like syllables, they may end up in sound.

Yet, dipping a wing in mirage,
Their minds still cling
To the shape of a pitcher, a
water spring
And temples where the air is delicate.

Deaths and Pretty Cousins is the title of a sequence of warmly sardonic sonnets about Campbell's family and forebears—a fair account of the eccentricities of earlier days in Australia.

The neighbours to David Malouf's island are shown on the cover hacking and tearing at each other—in Piero di Cosimo's painting of the battle between the Lapiths and the Centaurs. It is Malouf's great distinction to be able to move between Florence of the *quattrocento* and his native Brisbane without dislocating his imagination or disturbing his set of values. Few Australian poets have been so much at home in Europe as Malouf, and yet so willing to find the same intensity of feeling in the everyday life of their own parish. Malouf is helped by his excellent recall of childhood sights and sounds, and his awareness that every poet carries within himself a landscape composed of wholly personal features. He uses history in Auden's manner, as ironic underlining, but his parallelism is never automatic. I find his handling of metre and syntax sometimes too relaxed and discursive: he is fond of the long line and of additive methods of assembling poems. He is most moving when charting the lineaments of disappointment, the world-like world of literary men, as in "This Little Aeneid", where the ambitious traveller outward bound from Brisbane looks forward self-consciously to his career as a poet.

the new life
beckons—a coast whose every promontory
glitters with artefacts, plains
all air, by moonlight ghostly
with stick-white asphodel.
In your lotus the dragon seed
howls for empire. Time
like a new lend swalls
your entry. Give it
a name. Three syllables: say,
Italy.

Philip Roberts's nuderuism is very different. It is jokey, raunchy and sometimes quite dazzling. I don't know whether Roberts's Canadian origin (he has lived a long time in Sydney) make him seem more in the American mould, but when he published *Willy's Dream*, he must have been aware that readers would be reminded of Berryman's *Dream Songs*. Roberts's 130-page poem is in short sections dealing with the life and times of one Willoughby or Will, and three of his friends, who live a near-communal life in very recognizable Sydney. Food, sex and music are their chief concerns, other than the interaction of their emotional lives. Or are they all in one mind—being dreamt by Will perhaps, as the blurb suggests? It doesn't matter very much, as Roberts employs his jamfinated dramatis personae chiefly to staff a travolling conveniencia of poetic expostulation. His language is highly attractive: I have never come across hybridized American used so tactfully. It makes English imitators of American pastels seem very heavy-handed. Sometimes the clues are too hard to follow. In one poem, Roberts writes: "This song'll be clear, no code/to come between Will & you". It is a false promise and the ending is not justified—"So there it is in all./Now let it be sung". Amid all the youth language and the hip jargon, Roberts speaks poignantly of some old worries. One of his

Doing philosophy's job

By Val Vallis

JUDITH WRIGHT:
Because I was Invited
258pp. Melbourne: Oxford University Press. $A14 (paperback, $A8).

A. D. HOPE:
Judith Wright
43pp. Oxford University Press. $1.50.

Judith Wright's collection of talks given "because she was invited" has as its first concern poetry in general. It also presents a further group of poets treated in the manner of her previous book *Preoccupations in Australian Poetry*. The great merit of that book lay in her rejection of the usual critical approach, with its emphasis on style and technique at the expense of theme and philosophy. *Because I was Invited* includes studies on the neglected Brisley, Mackellar and William Baylebridge; further essays on Christopher Brennan and John Shaw Neilson; on Romanticism in Australia, the Australian aboriginal both as theme in poetry and as poet, on the more conventional problem of the post-war crisis in communication, and on conservation, a cause for which she has been the most persuasive campaigner, for two decades.

In the broadest sense the issue of conservation underlies the entire work. Blake's strictures on the evils of "single vision" are central to her argument, as are her own lines from one of the earliest poems:

O sighing at the blistered door,
darkening the evening star,
the dust accuses. Our dream was
the wrong dream.

Not only is the landscape the very basis of experience, imagery and meaning being laid waste in the name of progress, but a similar pillage is being carried on in the terrain of the imagination itself. Because poetry is being used for school purposes, "like chalk", it also has become an object of "single vision", a commodity, never "some new tremendous symbol for the soul". Sterile academic criticism and unimaginative school teaching-for-examinations must be held responsible for the erosion of poetry's joy and love in the same [illegible] are all related, and what should [illegible] must be held accountable for the rape of the physical earth.

For all the seriousness and the prophetic content of her message these talks are never sermons. She is too good a poet to generalize. Her detail is always concrete, sharp, significant, whether in quotations selected from the poets she discusses, incidents that have occurred in the melancholy history of teaching her poetry in schools, or facts painstakingly amassed for the saving of places such as Elliston Island, a so-called "dead" coral island off the Queensland coast.

If one talks in particular had to be selected to exhibit the quality of Judith Wright's achievement in this field, I would choose "Science, Value and Meaning" as Coleridge [illegible]

four characters asks himself whether

All the beautiful crowd you ran with
uncle you along to barndances
to chaperone collar posts? The one
just really chokes you to look at
thinks of you as a father?
Down the road the mossied stone
of the aged persons home—
run lightly (carefully) past
raise a few pulses perhaps?

Rodney Hall has been an important influence, along with Tom Shapcott, in the change which has come over Australian poetry since the 1950s. He has earned the commendation of Robert Graves, which is not surprising, if rather unusual: his earlier poems are highly Gravesian. I like him best when he is inventing stories and creating myths. Like many poets today, he is fond of the extended sequence of brief poems, a device which allows a poet to be short-winded and yet obliges him to sustain his welcome. The best effects are cameos or vignettes, often direct pieces of observation, as in "Tree Children":

the trees were lofty, delicate,
seemed to have been there longer
than the house, longer than our
lives:
When we felled the silky oak
its clustered flowers
sprayed us with their honey.

Buddhist stillness and the mysticism of objects is at the heart of Robert Gray's poetry. He has an untrained knowledge of what is being written in Britain and America, and can match any style he chooses, but he continues to regard poetry as a sort of divine cataloguing. The closest approach he makes to any older poet is to Gary Snyder, though he has the more strongly developed sense of humour. He is fond of reverse metaphors—rain is "just/short hairs/on a barbers sheet" and lugs "are like rolled ronsts". Grey is as much at home in boarding-houses and in laundromats as in the bush or by the sea. His aim seems to be to wrest the urban world from the dead hands of straight reporting [illegible] would certainly recommend Coast Water Journal to anyone who wanted to know what life is like in Australian small towns. For [illegible] I would prefer Gray to use his synthesizing powers to give [illegible] to his poems.

These six books and a [illegible] hardly amount to a biography of the body of contemporary Australian poetry. I have said nothing about the older generation, including the remarkable figure of John Blight, nor done more than recommend Douglas Murray and Roger McDonald among poets in their thirties. Perhaps the tribe will nurture poets who write for it. Perhaps in the way things are going in Britain also certainly British poetry is unfairly ignored in Europe and America. English, the [illegible] world language, may be on the point of breaking up, or becoming a dialect of American. Whatever the future, the Australians have every reason to be interested in the poetry being written in this country today.

AUSTRALIAN BIOGRAPHY

Architects

All buildings type the skeleton
vertical structures braced and strong
with pelvic floor and shoulder bone,
the rooms within like organs strung
on muscle, rib and artery,
with corridors of nerve and vein;
threatened by time and gravity.
Buildings depict the shapes of work.

But when the architect must make
the shapes of Parliament and Crown,
of wisdom, art or government,
gallery, temple, library,
he takes the curve, the arch, the dome,
and chooses marble's clarity
to flash the hard-pressed membrane out.
Skull's swell of thought and memory
houses time past and time to come.

Your head lay heavy on my arm,
so massive, though so delicate,
that love could scarcely bear the weight.

On great Ur-slabs of concrete terraces
or rust-red boxes of girder and cross-member
they sit, eating their sandwiches
at noon. They look at home there
among the stylised trunks of metal forests,
the unfinished work.
Maybe the half-built is our proper habitat
manhandling raw material
in basic contact, manipulation, direction
of various substances. Simple . . .

Later, the place changes.
Dressed in plastic wallboards, fitted
with doors and windows, connected
by cables, wires and pipes to the feed-in world
it becomes part of a circuit.

Coming in later to consult officials,
sign papers, buy, sell, argue over contracts,
they observe the fake marble, the carpets
covering those bare encounters of concrete and steel,
the corridors scurrying with unfamiliar errands—
wondering. Wondering about building.
How whatever we construct gets complicated,
gets out of order and beyond control.

Judith Wright

Recalled to life

By Rick Trader Witcombe

ELIZABETH SALTER:
The Lost Impressionist
A biography of John Peter Russell
209pp. Angus and Robertson. £5.80.

John Peter Russell played many roles—rich, footloose Australian heir to an iron fortune; navigator of the South Seas and boatbuilder; adviser and semi-patron to certain Impressionist painters, most notably van Gogh; husband and patriarch—he had two wives and fathered six children by his first wife; and, finally, he was a gifted painter in his own right who chose not to exhibit or promote his work in his own lifetime, hence the title of Elizabeth Salter's biography, and also its theme. Just how good an Impressionist John Peter Russell was remains to be seen. A recent exhibition of his oils and watercolours at Australia House (by no means fully representative of his oeuvre) suggests that he was indeed highly gifted. The paintings, many of which depict the seascapes of Belle Ile, the remote island off the coast of Brittany where Russell lived and worked until the death of his first wife in 1908, are full of a high-spirited dynamism of colour and form, and yet at the same time the figures in the paintings—the boys on the shore watching a giant crab, the fishermen poised interrogatively on the edge of a cliff, his sabots neatly arrayed behind him—suggest a clarity of concentration, a stillness of mind that often accompanies an activist artist like Russell.

He was born in Australia in 1858 and died in Australia in 1930. Most of his life, however, was spent in Europe, particularly France, and the crowd he moved with (outside the doors of his immediate family tribe) were mainly artists, his closest links being with van Gogh, Monet and Rodin. Unlike his friend and contemporary the Australian painter Tom Roberts, Russell was relatively obscure in his own country when he died, though his reputation among his fellow-Impressionists in France was secure. Whether or not he was "the greatest Impressionist of them all", as his son Lionel suggested after his death, the admiration felt for his work by Monet, van Gogh and Matisse indicates the solid substance of his talents. As eighteen, Russell was left a fortune and, his economic future at least assured, went to London where he studied at the Slade, and then later to Paris. Here he met Rodin's model Marianne Mottelocco and fell in love. After living together for three years they married and in 1888 left the distractions of the semi-communal bohemian life of Paris and settled on Belle Ile, where Marianne began to have babies and he settled down more calmly to find out for himself what Impressionism was all about—by painting.

What Impressionism meant to Russell can be glimpsed in what he wrote in a letter to van Gogh about Monet: "like nearly all the so-called Impressionist work, his form is not enough studied. The big mass of form, I mean. The trees too much wood in branches for the size of the trunk, and so against fundamental laws of nature." There was a naturalistic sympathy in Russell, then, which was much less apparent in Monet and the "fauves"; and, as Miss Salter points out, his own work "was architectural enough to suggest Cézanne rather than Monet".

The free existence on Belle Ile soon had its effect on Russell's attitude towards his work. "I let myself go; paint what I see and feel and hang the rules", he later wrote. Rodin, who had stayed with the Russell ménage on Belle Ile for a working holiday, also detected a vital loosening-out process at work in his young friend: "You have followed and still follow an inspired good sense which, unfortunately, we do not always have". It was his essential quality of well-being which attracted the more impecunious and tormented Impressionists, for he was a generous man who subsidized their careers by purchasing the occasional painting and offering hospitality when he could. But the death of his beloved Marianne of cancer in 1908 ended the light-hearted escapade of Belle Ile. He returned to Paris, painted furiously in Italy, and during the First World War took cheap accommodation in London while he designed wheelchairs for the war effort. His fortune was eroded by allowances to his children and Red Cross donations. When he returned to Australia in 1921, with his second wife Caroline de Witt Merrill, his manner of living was closer to the "poor cove" than the "rich eccentric", though his energy was little diminished. When he died suddenly of a heart attack in 1930 he was building himself a house at Watson's Bay on Sydney harbour and was planning to sail up the Hawkesbury in a new boat and paint. Spiritually as well as physically it seemed that he had "come home".

"Words to him were cumbersome things . . . his pen remained a utility object", Elizabeth Salter comments on Russell's singular absence of the self-promotional article. He kept no journals, and after Marianne's death he destroyed many of his paintings. From the biographer's point of view, Russell presents documentation problems. The artist as activist is too busy to leave an introspective wake, and Miss Salter gets round the absence of "direct voice" material from Russell by providing an "Impressionism" of her own. For instance: when Russell sailed to the South Seas in his ketch, she quotes Robert Louis Stevenson's notes on similar travels some years later; and she depicts his enthusiasm for Japanese art through the voice of van Gogh, explaining his similar enthusiasm to brother Theo. This is an intricate technique, a kind of spiritual mosaic, inspired by the biographer's subject rather than being wholly about him. But although Elizabeth Salter has the experience and skill to keep her subject buoyant, the character of the man remains somewhat elusive.

The royal prerogative

By D. P. O'Connell

If the street outside the offices of the premier of Queensland there fly three flags, the Union flag in the place of honour flanked by the flags of Australia and Queensland. It has been so since 1900. The Union flag flies over the Government Houses of all of the Australian states. On the pavilions at the Royal Shows of the several states, Union flags equal in number Australian flags. Creeping republicanism in the progressive elimination of the symbols of the monarchy—such as the removal of the royal cipher from letter boxes, decreed by the Labor government in its last days—has been baited. "God Save the Queen" is again the only official anthem, though national songs are to be used on informal occasions. All of this reflects a social and political situation which is little understood in Britain.

Australia has had its waves of republicanism for more than a century, and in every instance they have receded. In the late 1960s some Australian intellectuals began to argue that the sense of the British connection was a millstone around Australian necks, inhibiting the fullest development of national sentiment. They suggested that the common monarchy could not outlive the gradual historical separation of the two countries, and that a republic was an idea to which Australians should begin to accustom themselves. It is not without significance that most of them linked republicanism with structural changes within Australia itself, particularly with the change from a federal system to a centralized state.

It is doubtful if republican sentiments strike much of a response in Australia today, after the efforts of Mr Whitlam to progress beyond what the Australian institutions or the Australian public would stand. But the issue of the royal prerogative has been revealed to be one of the fundamental questions concerning the future of Australia, not only because the Governor General dismissed Mr Whitlam, but because it is the keystone of the federal structure. It is, therefore, a matter for continuing consideration, not only among progressive thinkers but throughout the country as a whole.

The questions surrounding the exercise of the royal prerogative in Australia are theoretically as interesting to people in the United Kingdom as to Australians because of the implications for this country of the present discussions about devolution and the continuing unity of the United Kingdom.

It was the Constitution which defeated Mr Whitlam, and the significance of this cannot be underestimated. It is a truism that federations cannot be contrived unless there is the psychological basis to sustain them, which is why the British attempts to solve problems in the West Indies or Central Africa by creating federations failed. But the reverse is equally true: federations are not easily subverted when the psychological basis of federalism is firm. The past three years have revealed the extent of popular support for state rights in face of the centralist challenge of Canberra, at least in the outer states of Queensland, Western Australia, and Tasmania, where centrifugal pressures are fundamental. This was not recognized by Mr Whitlam, either, perhaps because it was unpalatable, or because the electoral base which formed his political power in Sydney could be made to prevail.

Mr Whitlam's battle with the states was in large measure his undoing, and there must now be many in the Australian Labor Party who will be more determined than ever to force changes in the constitutional situation, and who, wiser after the event, will be more adroit about doing it than Mr Whitlam was. The threat to the states cannot be considered to be over while the possibilities of subversion of the Constitution remain.

Mr Whitlam had the perception to recognise that the loose ends of the Constitution from which he could begin to unravel the whole thing were to be found in the matter of the exercise of the royal prerogative. What he did not apparently credit was the resilience of institutions which the Australian people have inherited from Britain, and which reacted against him. This sense is obviously weaker in the industrial complexes of New South Wales and Victoria, with their concentrations of non-British migrants, than it is in other states, and the voting patterns reflect this. But even in these states the issue of states' rights is connected with the whole institutional structure.

This sense of institutions has come as a surprise to some people who tended to misunderstand the rather desperate endeavours of the late 1960s to find a specifically Australian identity in Asia, which led to a dangerous neglect of Europe and of European history in favour of the pursuit of sometimes implausible associations. But the truth of the matter is that the only thing with any real depth to it in the Australian consciousness is the British inheritance, however unaware people may be of it. In many respects Australia is more "British" in its ways and its institutions than is the United Kingdom.

It is not merely a question of there being no real alternative to the monarchy in Australia. Most Australians have demonstrated their disquiet at the undermining of familiar institutions within which they have felt a certain security. How else is it possible to explain the success of the premier of Queensland, Mr Bjelke-Petersen, in his battle with Mr Whitlam? His charge that Mr Whitlam was bent on turning Australia into a republic, repeatedly made in conjunction with his assaults on socialism, and his promotion of the slogan "Queen of Queensland", had its impact on the electorate, which in his state destroyed Labor in the state election of December 1974 and savaged it at the federal election of December 1975. The charge struck home because it expressed the link that exists between the retention of the monarchy and the survival of the federal system. The two are constitutionally and politically inseparable.

The Australian Constitution is a Westminster Act of Parliament of 1900. It entrenches the monarch as one of the three elements of Parliament. It confers executive power on the Governor General, but its founding fathers supposed that his office, like that of the governors of the Australian colonies at Federation, would be constituted by letters patent, as in the case of colonial governors, and that his powers would be regulated by prerogative instruments.

The state constitutions are all Victorian creations, dependent in one form or another upon Acts of the Westminster Parliament. The state governors exercise executive power in the states, including the summoning and dissolution of the state parliaments, and give the Royal Assent to state legislation; they are appointed by the monarch and in the exercise of their powers depend upon the Crown. In 1900, when the Australian colonies federated to form the Commonwealth, no one thought of regulating the relationship of the two streams of royal prerogative because ultimately the Crown acted, in respect of both the Commonwealth and the states, upon the advice of British ministers. Today the channel of communications from the state governors to the Crown is still through the Secretary of State, as it was in 1900.

The emergence of Australia first to Dominion status and then to independence took place without the traditional relationships of the states and the Crown being affected, but it caused to be appropriate for British ministers to advise the Crown in matters concerning the federal government. The fact that the states were vulnerable to subversion of their power by the federal government as a result of those changes was not widely recognized before Labor came to power in December 1972.

One of Mr Whitlam's first actions when he became Prime Minister was to seek the concurrence of the British Government in the proposition that the relationships between Australia and the United Kingdom are relationships of foreign affairs, and that any action taken by the Secretary of State at the instance of the state governments which was opposed by the federal government would amount to a "foreign affair" in the internal affairs of a foreign country. The legal ties that had survived the evolution of Australian sovereignty should be limited, he argued, only to the duties of British ministers in relation to the Australian state should be ended by repeal of the imperial statutes which created these duties. To this apparently plausible suggestion lay a serious constitutional threat to the integrity of the states.

An implication of his argument Mr Whitlam sought to foist upon the British Government was that the Queen—whom the Australian Parliament proclaimed in 1973 to be "Queen of Australia"—in her dealing exclusively with the Commonwealth Parliament could invoke the Statute of Westminster only to repeal imperial law, the creation of a right of appeal in state law would defeat this tactic of Mr Whitlam.

Out of this legal conflict, in which admittedly some skirmishes were lost, the states have emerged intact, and, indeed, with their direct channels of communication to Whitehall reinforced by the procedures adopted to deal with the problem. Mr Fraser has indicated that his policy is one of restoration of cooperative federalism and respect for the constitutional structure of Australia. Australians are probably less inclined than ever to contemplate what a government in Canberra might do if a presidential system were to be substituted for the monarchical system. Sir John Kerr's dismissal of the government has probably entrenched the monarchy rather than weakened it.

But the problem of the advice to be tendered to Her Majesty remains, and it would be statesmanlike to attempt now a solution which would remove the source of the embarrassment caused to the British Government when brought under the pressure from Mr Whitlam. A solution is politically possible only if it guarantees the present access of the states to the Queen and to Whitehall. To this extent the notion that in these respects the relationships of Australia to the United Kingdom are relationships of foreign affairs will have to yield to the legal truth that they are constitutional relationships intrinsic to the common monarchy. If no such solution is reached it can only be expected that the whole crisis will erupt again when there is a Labor government in Canberra more sure-footed in the way it goes about things, and then perhaps there will be serious political consequences for both countries.

Street fights

By Hugh Stretton

LEONIE SANDERCOCK :
Cities for Sale
260pp. Heinemann. £8.50.

Cities for Sale, according to its first sentence, is about failure. It describes and explains the fate of most attempts in this century to improve Australian cities by deliberate planning. Like the early planners, Leonie Sandercock is more interested in the cities' aspirations than their afflictions, but she tells how both have suffered from changing mixtures of private exploitation and public intervention.

British governors and surveyors designed and regulated the first cities, often quite well. Responsible government transferred power in their landowners, who degraded them considerably. A great speculative and building boom peaked in the 1880s and collapsed in the 1890s, leaving a chastened generation to receive the ideas of the English garden-city planners. Enthusiasts took up those ideas, but usually watered them down as well. They worried more about the physique of slums and the curative powers of villages than about the causes of poverty. They adopted Ebenezer Howard's garden-city visions without his radical ideas about the ownership of land.

A second generation eventually achieved some patchy public control of private land uses, often by cumbersome methods which did more for suburban monotonies and segregations than for the protection of poor residents. The regulation of private uses has rarely been coordinated well with public investments and services. The statutory maps still serve as spectators' guides. A third generation went to planning school, misunderstood the simpler social sciences, forsook social justice for urban efficiency and proceeded to do plenty of harm with both. "Through the narrow technical criteria of their planning, government authorities staffed by these technocrats have become new sources of oppression and injustice. Australians followed the millions in forced dislocations, public housing towers, office-building bonanzas, urban motorways. Only the result was original. In New South Wales (like usual residents' associations and environmentalists were joined by the communist-led Builders Laborers Federation; "green bans" blocked some hundreds of millions of dollars of public and private works. There have been other surprising alliances. In Adelaide's state government, the Liberals, faced with a strong country vote, transformed the city, mostly to its citizens' advantage, by massive public dealing in urban land and housing and unusually efficient planning of physical urban services. In that city, land is deliberately cheap. In Sydney and Melbourne it is not. Those cities have big rich land-developers, but they have bigger, richer housing-developers who cannot sell houses if the land under them is too dear. So multi-millionaire builders support many of the Labor Party's radical proposals in price-control residential land and to nationalize a good deal of the supply of it.

Over the years most of these initiatives had been frustrated by divided powers, conservative politics, poor administration and occasional corruption. Then the Whitlam Labor government came to power in 1972 with some radical urban planks in its platform, and did what it could to implement them with four of the six state governments hostile to many of them. There were sudden federal initiatives in public land development, public transport, engineering services, rate equalization between rich and poor municipalities, area improvement programmes, and decentralization to new cities and satellites. After three years the government fell; it is too soon to know which of its urban policies will survive the drastic public economies promised by the Conservative coalition.

In a final chapter the author wonders whether the cities can ever be much improved, or their citizens given more equal shares of space and access and opportunity, in a capitalist society. She thinks they probably can, if popular pressure is persistent and well laid. She suggests practical directions for land and housing policies, urban decentralization, and positive discrimination in the distribution of services and central-place activities to poorer regions and neighbourhoods. The local proposals are linked to some intelligent discussion of the general relations between class inequalities, urban structures and systems, and the politics of the possible. The book has more than Australian interest; its most persistent concern is with relations between specifically urban conflicts and the more general problems of social-democratic policy in capitalist-democratic societies.

It should also be welcomed in its native land. There are several hundred local histories of Australian suburbs, country towns and farming and mining settlements. But there are scarcely any general histories of the cities, and this is the first general history of urban policies. It is well researched and written by a young woman who skilfully exposes the values and incapacities of affluent male planners and reasons widely about practical alternatives.

Kangaroo and company

By Warwick Gould

W. S. RAMSON (Editor) :
The Australian Experience
Critical essays on Australian novels
344pp. Australian National University. $A9.95.

The jacket shows a nation of telegraph poles. Urban and suburban experience at last? No, the critics look backwards, concentrating on individual, and particularly on historical, novels. Form remains a nervous tic until the essays which succeed A. D. Hope's exemplary discussion of the *Tourmaline* affair. Then it becomes the issue which divides the writers from the critics, with Hope, a trenchant critic, on the side of the writers. The poet of "a nation of trees" also writes joyously on "*Kangaroo*—how it looks to an Australian". It has taken fifty years for Australians to recover from being flattered that Lawrence actually wrote about them. Mr Hope grants Lawrence his gesture as a visionary, but takes him to task for writing a sloppy novel, based on his tourist's pre- and misconceptions. Mr Hope trounces F. R. Leavis and others who have accepted at face value Lawrence's version of Australia, ignoring that it was observed from within the stale hell-jar of his own ego. Yet, as Mr Hope readily concedes, Lawrence had a splendidly unprejudiced eye for landscape, and therein lay his apparent mastery. Mr Hope assesses the deliberate inadequacy of Lawrence's travels, before turning his native eye on to the particulars of life and manners which Lawrence gets so awfully wrong. This essay is a landmark in "seeing" Australian literature.

G. A. Wilkes, too, removes critical barnacles in a model essay on *Geoffry Hamlyn*, travelling the simple virtues of Kingsley's "painterly eye" in his mythmaking observation of Eden-Monaro. Mr Wilkes makes illuminating comparisons with Buvchut and Chevalier and the romantic tradition of "typical landscape" in Australian painting.

The prose of this collection is at its best assured, but much of it tends towards the fumbling and dense. W. S. Ramson uses "pioneer situation", "frontier situation". He unconvincingly tries to dismiss past critical obsessions such as "national identity" in his introduction, but protests too much about their irrelevance (from his subbaltical retreat in Tuscany). Critical jargon clouds several essays : Frances Devlin Glass (on Furphy's novels) is entangled in "layers", "focuses", "modern style of novel", "romance tradition" (which one?). She reiterates that "Tom [is] self-deceived about his own life". Ken Stewart dogedly traces "motifs", many of them "Freudian", in the "symphonic surrealism" of *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*. "The wierdly evocative penetrative narration of meaningful incident" he gasps, as the novels slips out of reach. Behind his laborious misconstruction there is a real confusion of realism and naturalism. Mr Ramson, in his Alexander Harris essay, does not distinguish between two senses of the term "romance". Much time is squandered checking insignificant detail in *The Emigrant Family*. Michael Wilding, however, instantly establishes a close lien on *His Natural Life*, with a quotation from Brome's *The Antipodes* :

The people through the whole world of Antipodes,
In outward feature, language, and religion,
Resemble those to whom they are opposite :
. . . but in their manners,
Their carriage, and condition of life,
Extremely contrary.

Immediately the title of Clarke's novel is illuminated : is there "noble savagery" in the "natural life" of the penal colony, or is it "nasty, brutish and short"? One comes to resent the hermetic approach which allows Mr Wilding to ignore the novels of Charles Reade, Dostoevsky's *House of the Dead*, or even Keneally's *Bring Larks and Heroes*, any of which might have strengthened his discussion of Clarke's use of convict records and the form of his historical novel. Alan Brissenden uses textual scholarship well in his *Robbery under Arms* essay, but makes few and minor adjustments to critical estimes of Boldrewood's successful if unnourishing story.

Frances Devlin Glass is brisk with Furphy, proposing to "assess the intellectual calibre" of Tom Collins, and finding him "intellectually incompetent, morally delinquent and dishonest". She does not display the amplitude of mind required in writing demonstrably about comedy—a difficult task, but fundamental for this writer. "To reduce the novel to these truisms is, of course, to do it a massive injustice", she blithely remarks, "and to pass over many of its verbal and intellectual felicities, its high sense of humour and Furphy's (and Tom's) basic assumption that he is throwing down the gauntlet to his hopless reader." It has not been picked up here. We are told that "the novel enacts several concrete moral situations", that "the Samaritan [Thompson] . . . generously administers [sic] to the unworldly Furlong". All is ground down. One escapes, in despair, with just the bare impression that the minor novels have suffered from the success of *Such is Life*.

Mr Stewart apologizes that "to select and explicate motifs . . . [in *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*] gives an impression of artificiality in the narrative that Richardson herself avoids". His assay is at least unpretentious, as is J. M. Douglas Pringle's rediscovery of Frederic Manning's *Her Private We*. He blames the celebration, and a few more butterflies are broken.

In the two Martin Boyd essays, the "cultural cringe" reappears. Mr Ramson on *Lucinda Brayford* writes : "Neither Martin Boyd's reading nor his knowledge of music or painting is absorusive [sic] . . . yet one is constantly being surprised by glimpses of a cultivation which is both broad and unusually integrated. . . . Boyd's allusions to the painters Meurling, Dousdin and Sisley . . . none of these is, of course, a particularly abstruse reference. . . ." Yet Memling is abstruse enough for Pamela Nese to find "his serenity, simplicity and spirituality *typical of fifteenth century European painting*" (italics added). A glance at the Boyd family "bluebooks" compiled by Martin Boyd would disabuse Mr Ramson of his underestimation of Boyd's genealogical knowledge. From the headnotes to *Lucinda Brayford* he traces its themes, but its values baffle him. Paul Breyford bases his maiden speech in the Lords on "such a high standard of political morality that no one took it seriously"; neither can Mr Ramson. He blames the characterization of two figures who dramatize Boyd's values. Paul Breyford, last Lord Crittenden, confronts the "dirty digger" Stryker, once a pornographic postcard seller, now Lord Fitzaucell, a First Street press baron, in a mismerably Waugh-like moment (*Lucinda Brayford* was published within a year of *Brideshead Revisited*) :

"Sir", he said, "your newspapers have for two decades been engaged in the degradation of the proper feelings of our people. What is vile they offer to gloating eyes, what is vindictive they applaud. You have done more harm to this country than any of its external enemies. In addition to this, one of your friends has seduced my niece, my elder brother died of disgust after entertaining you at dinner and you tried to sell filthy postcards to my younger brother when he was on his honeymoon. In my opinion, and I am given to understatement, you are the scum of the earth, so much of which has recently risen to the surface. I beg you will leave before my butler throws you down the steps."

Mr Ramson comments : "[This] is, on the level of social realism, not simply a gratuitous insult foisted upon Fitzauncell, it is an 'moral' authorial sense of the plausible which allows Fitzauncell such an action as the postcard incident as antecedent, poetically determinate, perhaps but, on this level, cheap in its contrivance." In Boyd's *Day of my Delight* Mr Ramson could have found the "germ" of Fitzauncell in a reported remark by Lord Beaverbrook that he would have sold dirty postcards. Boyd tells how "a leading newspaper" refused him a prize he had won for the novel, and how grateful he was not to receive money from the press. One may demur from his condemnation of the press, but the fictive portrayal of his values is sound. Miss Nase helps here. She quotes lavishly from Boyd's *Much Else in Italy* in her essay on the Langton novels, and a clear sense of his values emerges. In her possibly ironic subtitle "praising superior people" Boyd would have detected a "nasal twang".

If A. D. Hope's *Kangaroo* essay goes to the heart of a problem of Australian writing, "seeing" a new land and expressing that "new" experience in appropriate forms, then his essay on Stow's *Tourmaline* is very much the centre of this book, going to the heart of the problems of Australian criticism, which has always been prescriptive. When prescription confronts achieved writing, the result is more often gang warfare than lively debate. The "Angry Penguins" case is renowned, but the *Tourmaline* affair may have stopped Randolph Stow writing novels. Perhaps it did not. Mr Hope follows the squabble from Leonie Kramer's 1963 review of *Tourmaline*, where she sought to define the limits of realism in Australian fiction. She condemned Stow's mixture of poetic symbolism and realistic description, which was, as Mr Hope shows, to take a limited view of a futuristic fantasy set in isolated town after a global catastrophe. Mr Hope himself admits to sharing the slight socio-realist bias of most of the critics in this volume, but he is sympathetic to Stow's novel, ecclysing its Taoist theme and rescuing it from Mrs Kramer, who had turned it into something like Thurber's moose—the horse with antlers died on it—before criticizing it for being an unsatisfactory moose.

The narrowness of focus in this collection could only be pleasing if the contributors to it wrote from an implicitly wider range. Using realistic bases, Australian writers have experimented in modes prophetic, visionary or fantastic. The "harsh . . . biblical country" has naturally suggested "mad apocalyptic dream" to Stow, White and Keneally. But the critics retain their predilection for social realism. R. F. Brissenden's essay on White's *The Vivisector* is both unctuous and patronizing to social scientists, while making a vast retreat from literary criticism into extra-mural chat—all the right places but all the right genuflections. Mr Ramson is unhappy with *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*. Keneally's lesser novels, the more "realist" *The Survivor*, or *The Fear*, would have suited him better. Unsurprisingly, no one tackles *A Dutiful Daughter*. Mrs Kramer writes scrupulously on the ending of *The Tree of Man*, but she still clings to rigid conceptions of The Novel. Stow's change of "babbitry" was hard, but his old adversary retains a Winters-like intransigence. Dorothy Green magnanimously reconciles vision and realism in her *Yoss* essay, a surer piece than her Stead essay, where she breathlessly demonstrates the continuing power of *The Man who Loved Children*. The final answer for Mrs Kramer is in the *Yoss* essay. She can assent but grudgingly to Sian Parker's dying epiphany, for which White has assembled a "dome of many coloured glass" which unlifes in a retrospective glance the entire novel. She finds the aggregation of its parts arbitrary.

Dorothy Green, however, quotes A. N. Whitehead : "Every scheme for the analysis of nature has to face those two facts, *change* and *endurance*. There is yet a third fact . . . *eternity*." Mrs Green wonders if "White was turning over in his mind the two fundamental ideas which form such a persistent theme in Australian writing, perhaps because, in its natural state, in the absence of Europeans, Australia is a country suited to the nomad, to man stripped of all but the essentials".

The Australian Experience is an introverted book. Its hermeticism might seem inoffensive, but it is surely important that critics writing for the survey-course audience (however much they protest they are not) bring to bear upon their subject other voices, other contexts. The Australian experience has been above all a crisis of perception and a question of aesthetics. Judith Wright heard the "whine" of "division" years ago, and many of the novels discussed here show that their writers have joined her in fusing the "lebanum and dogwood" in "a single florno". If the writers can find the forms to solve the problems of a double vision and a dual literary heritage, then the critics have not yet wholeheartedly joined them. The overspecialisation in this collection may yet prove only another phase in the establishment of criticism as a humane and powerful force in Australia. Mr Hope and Mrs Green certainly point the way.

The Man Fern near the Bus Stop

The man fern near the bus stop waves at me
one scaly feather swaying out of the dark,
slightly drunk with rain and freckled with old spores
it touches me with its slow question mark.

Something in the shadows catches at the throat,
smelling like old slippers, drying like a skin,
scraped like an emu or a gumboot stuck with fur,
straining all the time to take me in.

Cellophane crinkles in the fern's pineapple heart.
The fur parts slowly showing a crumpled horn.
A ruffled sea horse stands in swaying weed,
and held in cotton wool, a mouse unborn.

I look down at it now, a tiny toe, a crook,
remembering voices and growth without choice—
the buds of fingers breaking into power
and long fibres breaking in the voice.

Vivian Smith

From Balliol to Melbourne

By Gerald S. Graham

R. M. CRAWFORD :
"A Bit of a Rebel"
The life and work of George Arnold Wood
386pp. Sydney University Press. Distributed in the United Kingdom by Prentice Hall. £11.20.

"*A Bit of a Rebel*" is not only a labour of love, it represents the measure of the sense of value of its distinguished author. In an age which witnesses an unending stream of memoirs and biographies, usually of persons of public renown, R. M. Crawford, Emeritus Professor at the University of Melbourne, has, after prolonged and careful research, written about the life and work of a little-known Englishman who emigrated to Australia in 1891, and taught history at the University of Sydney for nearly forty years. The son of a prosperous Manchester cotton merchant, a liberal of puritan mould nurtured on the ideals of St Francis of Assisi, a scholar of high quality, George Arnold Wood wrote few books, and held no posts of power, but he seems to have exerted an incalculable influence on the minds and lives of those he encountered inside and outside university walls.

After three years of undergraduate study at Owens College of Victoria University (Manchester), he went to Balliol College, Oxford in 1885, where he obtained a first in history, and the covered Stanhope Prize for an essay on Wallenstein. At a school of Bishop Scribe taught by Stubbs and Freeman, he came under the influence of two men who were to be his models for life, Stubbs for thoroughness, but courses built upon the famous "Select Charters", he felt to be too confining. It was J. R. Green who came the nearest to his ideal of the historian as a teacher. None the less, he loved the community life at Balliol, with the immortal Jowett, A. L. Smith, Tait, Tout, Beazley, and Thomas Seccombe; and the path he had beaten to the "dreaming spires" was to be followed by scores of young Australians.

When Wood arrived at Sydney, he found no "sluggish backwater of the mind". Lack of opportunity at home, higher salaries, and sometimes reasons of health, brought to the colonial universities of that period many men of as high quality as those who staffed the universities in Britain. But they were nevertheless few, and some of the stimulus of rubbing minds with his equals or betters was missing. Moreover, for many years, he alone embodied the history department, and while he never surrendered his professional craft (as his *Discovery of Australia*, 1922, provides ample evidence) he was bound, for the sake of his students, to concentrate on major lines of development over long periods of history. It was probably for this reason that he became, in the words of his biographer, more of a moralist than an scalyst.

Wood had an almost passionate attachment to the British Empire, but it was essentially a Gladstonian empire, "as seen through the spectacles of John Morley". As a lad of eighteen, he had read Seeley's *Expansion of England*, and had been stirred by the vision of a great federation, the trustee of humanity and justice and morality. The onset of the Boer War came as a sudden and fearful shock, challenging his cherished beliefs in the triumph of principles he had so often expounded. To him, the Boer War was a betrayal of the Imperial Ideal: Britannia's image had been defaced, and his frequent speeches to that effect very nearly led to his dismissal from the chair of history. Against a hysteria heightened by early reverses, Wood could make little headway. But throughout the dark days, he had the immense comfort of a happy marriage. The recurrent loneliness of the exile was largely dispelled by the companionship of his wife, and, after 1902, his family. Moreover, he had a refuge, a country cottage perched high on the Blue Mountains overlooking miles of majestic valleys. There he learned to love the Australian landscape, but always "as a foreign mistress to whom must be denied some part of his native English soul".

For all his love of peace, Wood could, when conscience called, be as combative as his beloved Cromwell, although certainly less bloodthirsty. And sometimes passion could lead him into exaggerated declarations of liberal principle. "There's only one Christian gentleman in the whole story [of late nineteenth-century European foreign policy]—Gladstone!", he wrote to his wife. "Disraeli was about the most unspeakable of the lot." But occasional bursts of bias, even in the lecture theatre, did not diminish his stature as a man of integrity and erudition. He had a genius for communicating his own effervescent enthusiasm to hundreds of students; he gave the least imaginative some sense of "the power and the glory", and he won their devotion not simply as a man of broad learning, but as a warm human being, who never required the buttresses of professional status and authority to sustain him. George Arnold Wood deserved this fine book, written with sensitivity and so much grace, by an old pupil of equal metal.

The last days of appeasement

By Trevor Reese

R. G. NEALE (Editor) :
Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-49
Volume 1: 1937-38
616pp. Australian Government Publishing Service. $A12.

The first volume of *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-49* signifies the entry of Australia into the select, but growing, company of nations for which the publication of foreign policy documents is now feasible and worthwhile. The project as a whole will reach back to the beginning of the century, but this first series will cover 1937-49, of which 1937 and 1938 are accounted for in the initial volume. The late 1930s are a good period in which to begin, for Australia's foreign policy was just emerging from the chrysalis stage to face events and problems that were to determine the country's later and present role in the world. The Australian government, with minimal diplomatic representation abroad and only an infant and inexperienced external affairs department at home, viewed the international scene through spectacles designed in London, and its attitude was conditioned by membership of the British Commonwealth; but it was already conscious that the interests of Australia did not always coincide with those of the mother country.

The threat from Germany and Japan is inevitably the dominant subject throughout 1937 and 1938, and Australia's support for appeasement is amply documented. The Australian Prime Minister, J. A. Lyons, arrived at the Imperial conference in London in 1937 armed by his civil servants with a wealth of memoranda on questions of defence, security in the Pacific, and international relations. He did not get far, because he regarded Commonwealth unity as a policy of first importance, "the [illegible] objective", according to Lyons, "which we should pursue wholeheartedly rely on Britain to preserve peace", and he believed that "the safety and security and prosperity of all the members of the Commonwealth depended on their sticking together". He wanted to see all the Dominions cooperating with Britain: "The main thing was to inform the world that the whole Empire stood firmly with Britain and believed implicitly in her policies." South Africa and Canada were wary of any sort of commitment, however, and British policy towards the worsening international situation was henceforward pursued in the knowledge that no Dominion was prepared to be associated with any British obligations towards central and eastern Europe. It seems to have been appreciated almost unconsciously at the conference that the answer to Commonwealth security lay with the United States, and one of the principal questions in a defence paper prepared for the Australian delegation was the degree to which British policy was in harmony with American in Asia and the Pacific and the extent to which United States cooperation could be relied upon if a firm stand were taken against an aggressor. This, and Lyons's unsuccessful resurrection of the idea of a Pacific pact, illustrated a recognition of the potential importance of the United States which, it may be assumed, will become a strong feature of later volumes in the series.

The Australian documents confirm the established view that the Dominions endorsed the policy of appeasement and took little interest in Germany's invasion of Austria in March 1938. Dominions Office cables kept the Australian Government informed of mounting German pressure on Czechoslovakia, but comments from Canberra were infrequent until the crisis stage was reached in September, and then diplomatic activity was so intense that prior consultation about British policy was impossible, and the Dominions had to be content with notification of decisions already taken. Nevertheless, the views of the Dominions were known, and the High Commissioners in London met the Dominions Secretary every day. Australia supported Chamberlain all the way, and was impatient with the unfortunate Benes: "In our opinion", Lyons wrote to Chamberlain, "the Czechoslovakian Government have not shown sufficient conciliation or offered concessions likely to satisfy the aspiration of the Sudeten Germans".

Naturally, the Munich agreement was well received by all the Dominions, and Lyons cabled in Chamberlain his Cabinet's "warmest congratulations" and the Empire's debt to the British Prime Minister's "unceasing efforts to preserve peace". Throughout the Czech crisis in September the official communications between the British and Australian governments only fleetingly referred to the existence of at least some press and parliamentary doubts in Australia about the direction of British policy, and there is no indication that at either official or popular level the morality or expediency of appeasing the fascist countries was questioned. In securing the Munich agreement, Chamberlain preserved the unity of the British Commonwealth and delayed the outbreak of hostilities in Europe by a year, during which the Dominions shed their illusions about the efficacy of appeasement. The arguments about Munich are not served or settled by the Australian record, and scholars exercised by the idea that Dominion feeling was a decisive influence on Chamberlain receive little encouragement.

It is abundantly clear that in the 1930s what is termed Australian foreign policy is a very frail bud. Purely Australian material of any significance is scarce, and the published documentary record is sensibly being supplemented from the Public Record Office in London. This emphasizes again the extent to which external affairs were still conducted within the context of the British Commonwealth and largely as a by-product of British foreign policy. At the same time, Australia enjoyed a more intimate association than the other Dominions with the policy-making machinery in London because Bruce, the High Commissioner since 1933, was respected as a former Australian Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs and was acquiring something of the aura of an elder statesman and trusted counsellor, valued on the British as well as the Australian side. Indeed, on occasion Bruce seems to have regarded himself as acting as much on behalf of Whitehall as of Canberra. Bruce had the further advantage over his fellow Dominion High Commissioners in London of being a member of the Privy Council: "Because I was a Privy Councillor", he told Lyons after Munich, "it enabled me to be told of and consulted with regard to matters which if I had not been could not have been disclosed to me even as the Representative of Australia."

Bruce remained High Commissioner until 1945 and, consequently, will be a central figure in this particular series of documents. The stage is going to get more crowded, however, and the action more vital and positive, especially after Dr Evatt becomes External Affairs Minister at the end of 1941. Thenceforward, Australia moves into a recognized international role that ultimately entails the rapid dissolution of the Commonwealth bond with Britain and the creation of a formal alliance with the United States. It all seems distant from the caution, uncertainty and immaturity of 1937 and 1938, but the indicators were already there: fear of Japan and concern over the base at Singapore; doubts about the ability of Britain to meet defence commitments in the Far East; anxiety over the possibility of hostilities in Europe taking off the Commonwealth's available naval resources and leaving Australia open to an expansionist Japan; tentative hope that the United States would recognize its responsibilities in the Pacific. The evolution of Australia's foreign policy had begun and the general direction it would take is discernible, but no one in 1938 would have believed that the relative importance to Australia of Britain and the United States would change so quickly or that Australia would be playing such a forthright part in international affairs in the 1940s, let alone Mr Whitlam's 1970s. It is a remarkable story, and this first handsome, well-edited volume serves as an excellent introduction to it.

The new balance of power

By Coral Bell

HEDLEY BULL (Editor) :
Asia and the Western Pacific
387pp. Nelson (Australia). $A15.95.

Preoccupation with the political and economic affairs of Australia's own neighbourhood has usefully led to the creation of a scholarly course for the analysis of such matters in Canberra, at the Australian National University. This book is essentially a product of that course, though it contains essays by analysts from other parts of the world, including two from the Soviet Union. The essays were originally written as papers for a conference in April 1973, and though one may wince at the delays imposed by contemporary publishing, the lapse of time is less damaging to most of them than might have seemed likely.

The true transformation scenes in the affairs of Asia and the Pacific had in fact already occurred in 1971-72, with the Nixon-Kissinger management of American rapprochement with China, and with the 1971 war which created Bangladesh, dismembering Pakistan and ensuring Indian ascendancy over the South Asian subcontinent. Even Australia managed its own small (and somewhat temporary) transformation-scene at the end of 1972, with the installation of Mr Whitlam's government. Though his time of power was a mere three years, it proved long enough to make some rather startling changes in the style and spirit, at least, of Australian foreign policy.

One may reasonably argue that there was rather less in these changes than met the eye. Mr Whitlam's political style was flamboyant: "discreet" would not have been his favourite adjective for his diplomacy. He had political as well as personal reasons for wanting the changes in Australian policy to look larger, especially in the eyes of his own backbenchers, than the continuities. Hedley Bull's essay in *Asia and the Western Pacific*, on the new course of Australian policy, was written after only the first, and most dashing, six months of Mr Whitlam's three years, and at that time the prospects of a true radicalism seemed more real than they look in retrospect. Mr Fraser's first three months have re-cemented the American alliance with a completeness that makes one realize how slight the earlier movement away had in fact been. Professor Bull's speculation that Australia might see its future security rather in the great power equilibrium than in the American alliance may now have been banished to some very distant date. Nevertheless it is of much interest as an assessment of the new complexity of the balance of power in that part of the world, and of the new capacity for manoeuvre with which this complexity might endow a middle-power like Australia, or even force upon a reluctant set of its decision-makers some day.

The essays by Michael Howard, Roderick MacFarquhar and Malcolm Mackintosh also address these large problems of the balance of power in Asia. There is no study of British policy, not even of its abdication of responsibility, but that perhaps is sufficient comment. Malcolm Mackintosh is interesting on the essential isolation of the Soviet Union in East Asia (as against South Asia) and its inability to come to terms with either Japan or China—a symptom of Soviet diplomatic intransigence even more visible now than when he was writing. Roderick MacFarquhar is illuminating on the reasons for the failure of efforts at détente between the Soviet Union and China, pointing out that it is not in the *domestic* interests of Chinese society, as Moo Tse-tung's defiance seems, that there should be any such détente, since it might infect the Chinese leadership with what he sees as the revisionist evils of Soviet society. Détente with the Americans is safer and easier precisely because of the enormous gap between American and Chinese values. As for India's relationship with the United States, the present coldness between them, as Michael Howard points out, is a relatively small and perhaps inevitable price which the United States has had to pay for the substantial diplomatic benefits of the rapprochement with China. The two Soviet essays are unfortunately exercises in that bland, opaque style of variation on an official theme which tends to defeat actual dialogue on such occasions.

As Professor Miller laments, the economists talked about economics and the politicians about politics, and the business of making convincing causal connections between them proved as refractory as ever. That all-purpose bogey-man (or paper tiger?) of the contemporary world, the multinational corporation, came in for some hard words, as usual. There is no doubt that the problem of how to secure efficient technology transfer from advanced economies to developing economies without relinquishing political subordination is one of the most sensitive problems of the foreseeable future.

Audray Donnithorne's scholarly analysis of the distribution of economic power and function between local and central authority in China seems to imply that the Chinese model may not be so readily applicable elsewhere as some policy-makers in developing countries hope hopefully assumed. Her picture is of a very decentralized system, with the powers of central government quite minimal. It is an interpretation which, if valid, would explain the emergence of regional centres of political power as for instance in Shanghai, and would imply severe limits on China's capacity to act, and its development of trading or political relations with the West. The measures taken by Japan and Canada to limit investment, as outlined by Dr J. Barnevin, appear to offer more useful clues to the process of ensuring that the financial and industrial power of this advanced world is used only in ways compatible with the national interests of developing countries.

Altogether, one might observe that though the book's subtitle, optimistically, is "towards a new international order", the reality cogently pictured is rather towards a more complex rivalry. There is, however, no necessary contradiction: the diplomats' true art may be directed to producing a viable order from a complex rivalry.

Points of identity

By Ian Turner

KENNETH INGLIS :
The Australian Colonists
An exploration of social history 1788-1870
316pp. Melbourne University Press. £10.40.

The hardest break which confronts a colonial people, seeking to establish an identity independent of the nation from which it has sprung, is not political or economic but cultural. Habits of speech, behaviour, thought, emotional response wealth's available naval resources and leaving Australia open to an expansionist Japan; tentative hope that the United States would recognize its responsibilities in the Pacific. The evolution of Australia's foreign policy had begun and the general direction it would take is discernible, but no one in 1938 would have believed that the relative importance to Australia of Britain and the United States would change so quickly or that Australia would be playing such a forthright part in international affairs in the 1940s, let alone Mr Whitlam's 1970s. It is a remarkable story, and this first handsome, well-edited volume serves as an excellent introduction to it.

Historians found this ground much too slippery; they preferred the safe footholds provided in political and economic history. (W. K. Hancock and R. M. Crawford were distinguished exceptions, but their works, both called *Australia*, were those of the essayist rather than the analyst.) In *The Australian Colonists*, K. S. Inglis sets out to give historical reality to the Australian identity.

Professor Inglis starts from "familiar landmarks"—from the convict system, agricultural and pastoral settlement, the gold rushes, self-government. He moves on to explore and occupy "territory less well charted"—the social and political pressures which led Australian colonists to staka out a separate identity, and the symbols through which they sought to make it known and acceptable. He discusses the significance for the expression of national identity of Australia's public ceremonial occasions: imperial, national, religious, recreational. (Australia may be the only nation in the world which appoints a holiday for a horse race, the Melbourne Cup.) He investigates those man whom Australians have made heroes: statesmen, explorers, bushrangers, radicals.

The point is well taken: this is exciting new territory for Australian historiography. But holidays (and heroes) are not—or only rarely—made by the nation; they are made for their own purposes by particular classes, strata, or interest groups. It is the freely determined use of a holiday, the unselfconscious identification with a hero, the element of play, which helps to delineate a national ethos. The distinction is drawn, but not always as sharply as it might be.

Holidays and heroes alike expressed a characteristic ambivalence; were the colonists displaced Britons, or the progenitors of a new race? Many seemed to be having a noisy dollar each way. Professor Inglis's discussion suggests the broad division: the colonial elite, especially the British-born, sought to create "a new Britannia in another world"; the colonial democracy, especially the native-born, were much readier to cut the painter. It was a division that existed also within individual Australians, notably in that hero manqué, William Charles Wentworth.

The colonial democracy saw "Old England [as] a fine place for the rich, but the Lord help the poor". They proclaimed, "We Currency Lads call [Britain] abroad and this our home". But even those who spoke most proudly of a new identity suffered a further ambivalence, the "colonial cringe". They rejected the homeland as a model, yet looked over their shoulders for approval of their endeavour to build something new. And when they met with a real or imagined old-world slight (or even well founded criticism) they responded with what Anthony Trollope saw as the endemic Australian disease, "blowing".

Professor Inglis throws a brilliant light on the way in which Australian colonists were thinking about themselves between 1788 and 1870. If the picture is sometimes blurred, it is because the colonists were not sure themselves just who they were. There was little in the Australian past with which they could identify; the most widely recognized symbols were those of an imagined tomorrow.

This book describes itself as "an exploration of social history". It is not social history as presented by Michael Cannon in his fascinating re-creation of everyday life in town and country, his three-volume *Australia in the Victorian Age*. Nor is it intellectual history, in the sense of Manning Clark's moving inquiry into the gap between aspiration and realization, the nature of good and evil, in the context of *A History of Australia*. It is rather a history of public attitudes to and beliefs about the nascent Australian identity, of a society in the process of defining itself.

This is a new way, using unaccustomed evidence, for an Australian historian to look at his country, and it suggests fresh comparisons with other colonies of British settlement. Professor Inglis's approach may not commend itself to the young Marxists as it is conceived in terms of nation rather than class (but in those years the concept of class had scarcely been formulated). His orientation might be criticized by black or feminist historians (but colonial Australia was male and white). Other historians will find new paths suggested by his pioneering. But this is a major new beginning.

For Professor Inglis, too: he conceives of three more volumes, and these will place him squarely alongside Clark and Cannon. He has already suggested that it is the Anzac (the "digger") who will be his most enduring symbol; it says a good deal about the Australian identity that it should find expression in an anonymous collective hero who is identified by his participation in the opening salvo of what was arguably the most inglorious Allied defeat of the First World War. It will also be interesting to see how Professor Inglis feels, when he reaches the end of his project, about one of Sir Joseph Banks's 1797 throwaway lines: "Who knows but that England may revive in New South Wales when it has sunk in Europe."

Pen and tucker-bag

By T. G. Parsons

WILLIAM EVANS (Editor) :
Diary of a Welsh Swagman 1869-1894
216pp. Macmillan. £5.50.

"Ideolly", as Malcolm Brodbury reminded us a little time ago in *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, "a diary is an existential confession, a present-tense, hour-by-hour, emotion-by-emotion record of interaction with changing time, a tale of an exposed intelligent life". Certainly the diarist Joseph Jenkins, whose work has been collected, abridged and annotated by his grandson William Evans, would have agreed. By 1871 he had amassed thirty-two diaries, three of which had been written since his arrival in the colony of Victoria in March 1869, and this industry continued for the rest of his life. It is a sobering thought to a reviewer who begins a diary each academic year only to abandon the enterprise—by lack the diary—after a few days.

Unfortunately, although one may admire Jenkins's industry and fortitude, the diary is disappointing. The blurb-writer is correct to stress that this was a major formative era in rural Australia, but little of this emerges from the diaries. Nor do we learn much about one of the most exciting periods in Victorian politics; the victory of Graham Berry and his allies in 1877 caused considerable conflict and comment in the Ballarat area in which Jenkins was living, but he records none of it. Instead we are told that the Liberals, who had won the election, "are not only poor, but are illiterate as well!" Now, Berry, Jimmy Murams, James Munro and the Ballarat members may have been many things, but they were definitely not illiterates, as any reader of the letters in the daily press in 1877 would have known. Jenkins appears to have objected to most politicians—he had acquired some Australian traits—because they received payment. His political comments go little further although he does show the free-trade case-jerk reaction to protection. There is nothing about rural attitudes to the tariff, no mention of the rise of the so-called Country Party.

Joseph Jenkins does not seem to have liked the antipodes very much. Of course, he had reason. He arrived during a drought; at the first race meeting he attended at Castlemaine the bookie absconded with his winnings; the snakes were troublesome; he had to fight off a "traveller" with an axe and a dog, who attempted to steal his bedclothes; and near Tarnalah there were "marauding" kangaroos. The natives had strange customs—they did not even grease their boots—and Jaskins was greatly annoyed at one Mrs Boacher, who had written "disparagingly" of Lord Byron. ("This is in very bad taste as he is not alive to defend himself.") Still, there were compensations. He met a number of Welshmen who were overjoyed to see him; he had his Bible and the Psalms; he wrote pages and pages of poetry; he made some good mates; and he won most of the actions he brought against landowners who refused to pay him for his labour. The time spent on litigation in rural Australia never ceases to amaze; the wonder solicitors are prominent in country society.

Historians of rural Victoria will glean some interesting material from this book, but it adds little to our knowledge of the Australian past. Nevertheless it is good to be reminded that there were men like Jenkins working in the bush during the 1870s and 1880s. One shares with Dr Evans his deep admiration for his grandfather, a man sustained by his physical and moral strength and by his diaries. This is not so much a record of life in Australia, as an account of "an exposed intelligent life".

Macmillan Australia have done their usual first-rate job with this book, although even in these days of the death-wish of sterling the price seems exorbitant. Perhaps Dr Evans's enterprise may encourage others to chart the Welsh role in Australian history in more detail. His grandfather speaks at one point of meeting Welsh gold miners leaving Victoria for the New South Wales coalfields. Their contributions to coal and the Australian Labor Party were immense; one hopes they kept diaries.

The National Library of Australia at Canberra has published a facsimile of the first volume of John Alexander Ferguson's seven-volume *Bibliography of Australia* (£400pp. $A25). The remaining six volumes of this standard work are planned to follow, with these additional volumes of addenda. The original volumes were published separately over a period of twenty-eight years, and most of them have long been out of print.

Sexual politics

By Miriam Dixson

AMIRAH INGLIS:
The White Women's Protection Ordinance
166pp. Sussex University Press. £3.

The White Women's Protection Ordinance in Papua, January 1926, was essentially the work of Lieutenant Governor Sir Hubert Murray: the Australian Commonwealth Government was more than uneasy about it. Amirah Inglis portrays Murray as dictatorial, aloof, and holding Papuans in the civilized contempt standard for the time: yet within and despite these qualities, just. The ordinance's "savagery", Amirah Inglis explains, is best seen in two key provisions which were more severe than any then operating in Australian states on rape, and which placed it outside the range of most analogous British and French colonial legislation. First, the ordinance allowed the death penalty for *attempted* rape as much as for rape; second, its clauses applied only to "any *European* woman or girl". For years Murray, a Catholic in an unusually Protestant white community, had incurred displeasure by being "soft" on Papuans. During 1925 he had rebuffed the white community in rhetoric when they asked for punitive measures against a small but clear increase in sexual advances by Papuan males. Yet at the end of the year he suddenly changed, seeking guidelines from a 1913 official South African inquiry into "assaults" on white women. January of the following year saw the ordinance. The central challenge the book poses is: why that sudden reversal?

The demographic changes relevant to the ordinance, the author reveals, are these. In the Port Moresby census district, by the early 1920s there were about 600 non-Papuans and 6,500 Papuans, to the township of Port Moresby, centre of a mounting white agitation which at times approximated to hysteria, 400 non-Papuans, most of them salary or wage-earners, faced about 2,000 Papuans as their masters. The "status-sexual climate" which is crucial, I think, to understanding the ordinance's "savagery", reflected racial attitudes widely diffused in urban Australia at the time, but in a peculiarly latecapitalist way.

At the end of the 1920s, the mores of commercial and administrative strata had placed their stamp on Port Moresby township, which had by then acquired electricity, segregated hospitals, a dentist, banks, government offices, clubs, and fashion pages in its newspaper. During the period 1921 to 1933, the white female population of Moresby increased by about one fifth. Here, Mrs Inglis challenges a widely received view about the coming of white women to colonies in general. Writers today (among others O. Mannoni, Philip Mason and Herbert Mullar), in company with many white males in the 1920s, found part of the explanation for the deterioration of colonial racial relationships in the coming of white women. As evidence of deterioration, some modern writers focus on the kind of change in the status-sexual climate which resulted in the very ordinance we are discussing.

In Port Moresby, contemporary males found a variety of ways to elaborate the theme that white women flaunted themselves before primitive, animalistic males. Herbert Murray, for example, found "the real reason" for the 1925 "epidemic of assaults on white women ... was the carelessness of the white women themselves ...". Recent writers feel that white women, once they arrived in numbers, reversed early easy racial relations, including sexual relations. But for whom were they easy? Mrs Inglis lays that particular idyll to rest rather convincingly, and concludes: "Sexual relations . . . between white men and black women . . . far from showing evidence of happy harmonious relations before the arrival of white women . . . [in many cases suggest] exactly the opposite . . . contempt . . . sexual and racial patronage."

The final demographic change we need to note in order to comprehend both Murray's reversal and the severity of the ordinance is this: the 1920s and immediately antecedent years witnessed increasing numbers of Papuans giving up tribal ways and trying to embrace the ways of their masters. Urbanization saw them attempting to close a vast status gulf stemming from the first days of white settlement: they began to educate themselves, clothe themselves, participate for wages, pay taxes, and build houses with iron roofs. For this, as the author explains, the masters liked them less, not more: the masters did not want the status gulf to shrink.

As Frantz Fanon, Calvin Hornton and James Baldwin (to name only some) have shown, the colonized sex status in terms of sexuality just as much as the colonizers do. Thus, as increased urbanization brought increased status aspirations to Papuans, it also brought increased sexual aspirations about white women. Both sides sensed this, the whites over-reacted. There was far too much smoke. But there certainly was a fire. The whites over-reacted, by the way, partly because they carried a heavy freight of guilt over what they had done to Papuan women, something standout which Mrs Inglis documents simply.

W. M. Rich, assistant resident magistrate in one area and a government intelligence officer, was asked to find the reasons for increased sexual advances by Papuan males. His informers told him that the advances were meant as a "part of pay-back" because a white man takes a Papuan female when he wants one and the men resent this". Though the government continued its research into reasons for increased Papuan sexual advances, they ignored this crucial point completely. Yet it clearly signals that Papuan males were acquiring an enhanced view of their rights and their worth in the colonial relationship, because, as the author demonstrates, white "taking" had characterized the 1890s epoch of traders, seamen and miners, as much as that of the commercial and administrative 1920s.

Yet only in the 1920s, as urbanization began its transformation of Papuan status-aspiration, did Papuan males dare to act upon their long-present sense of outrage on the matter. (For both black and white males, much as John Dollard showed in *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*, the women, in some ultimate sense, seemed to exist as embodiments of their respective status-aspirations. It would be interesting to know if the women had feelings about it all.)

Murray's volte face is explained by Mrs Inglis mainly in two ways. Even while he rejected white anger over the small but clear increase in sexual advances in the early 1920s, "in fact he shared the residents' assumptions about native sexuality and its dangers". Mrs Inglis adds that the residents saw "any manifestations of a sexual nature", such as peeping, or touching, as "either evidence of a desire to rape, or, in any case, a sort of symbolic rape. They were evidence of a lack of respect for whites . . .". This last remark is as close as the author comes to the curious fusion between sex and status, which, for historians, might be the most significant aspect of Murray's reversal. For it is that fusion which situates the Moresby problem in an international twentieth-century context, in the setting of emergent nationalism in what later came to be called the Third World.

The anthropologist's calling

By J. A. Barnes

K. O. L. BURRIDGE:
Encountering Aborigines
A Case Study
260pp. Pergamon. £5 (paperback, £2.75).

Although *Encountering Aborigines* is the first volume in the Pergamon Frontiers of Anthropology series, it contains nothing from the series editor to indicate what kind of frontiers we are invited to explore. Indeed, this contribution aims at identifying the core of anthropology rather than its periphery. "The case study" of his subtitle allows Kenelm Burridge's perspective. He presents a discursive analysis of the encounter between anthropologists and Aborigines, viewed as one among many similar encounters between Western travellers and non-Western peoples from classical times onward. He chooses Aborigines partly, I assume, because of his long-standing personal contacts with Australia, but mainly, it seems, because the book is intended primarily for his son, born in Canberra twenty-five years ago.

Much about this book that other wise might appear odd makes sense when it is seen as a sensitive and wide-ranging scholar's effort to convey to his own same understanding of his personal interpretation of the intellectual tradition in which he has spent his working life. As a description of the ways of life of Aborigines, it is little more than a good guide to the literature. The treatment of the development of anthropology as part of Western culture is necessarily sketchy, though the account of anthropological inquiry in Australia is rather fuller. Quite appropriately, given its intended audience, this is a book of normative comment rather than factual instruction.

For Burridge, anthropology has a European signature. Many other civilizations have encountered exotic peoples beyond the pale but none has been moved to study the lives and customs of the strangers. *Republic* and the teachings of St Paul, came to be a dialectical engagement between rational objectivity and participation in oneness. The traditional role of the substance of anthropology is the positing of alternatives through otherness. The study of human affairs necessarily involves a moral relation between investigator and investigated. In this context, the European is not content to ask simply "What am I?" but poses the more difficult question, "What is man?".

Fitting the theory and praxis of anthropology into this matrix, Burridge gives a good deal of attention to eighteenth-century writers on the customs of distant peoples, writers whom most standard historical relegate to the prehistory of the discipline. In the nineteenth century his rise of the evolutionary theory as marking a shift of power from eighteenth-century aristocracy to the business tycoons, a shift from a stable altruism to a competitive elitism. In the late twentieth century the good old days of anthropology have gone for ever, for the field anthropologist's "role of the double-agent, ensnarable only in himself, always implicit, has been exposed and made explicit".

Tilpugh he provides some useful introductory reading lists, Burridge takes a good deal for granted. For example, in discussing the relations between diachrony and synchrony (a perennial theme in anthropological meta-theory), he says:

Whether it is a Javanese *wayang* or a Greek tragedy, *Hamlet*, or a mother's brother saving his forsaken of his sister's son to induct him into manhood, ambiguity and paradox are the essence of what makes for change or transformation whether these take place on the surface or at the deeper level of awareness connected by metanoia.

Yet, despite several opaque passages the message is clear. Even if anthropology disappears, the dialectic between reason and participation will continue. As one man's sandened parental apologia for his professional commitment this book is valuable. But it tells us more about the author than about anthropologists and Aborigines.

Original wisdom

By J. D. McKnight

GEOFFREY BLAINEY:
Triumph of the Nomads
A History of Australia Australia
285pp. Macmillan. £5.95.

It was not long ago that hunting and gathering societies were regarded as being at the bottom of the evolutionary ladder. They were believed to be living fossils of Stone Age man. The archetypes of a primitive hunting and gathering society were the Australian Aborigines. They, being closer to nature, were held to be more animal-like. Indeed they were so much like animals that they were completely ignorant about physiological paternity. Aboriginal women became pregnant allegedly because totemic spirits entered them through their loins. But we, of course, being civilized understood what sexual intercourse was all about. While we had religion and a belief in God, they had superstition, or at best polytheism or totemism which was part of nature; while we had science they had magic; while we had progressed, and were daily progressing, they were either cultural degenerates or unfortunates who had been caught in an evolutionary backwater; while we had a complex material culture which gave us leisure (well, some of us) and freedom from want (well, again, some of us) which allowed us (particularly our philosophers, theologians and other savants) to think about the finer things of life, in contrast the life of primitive man was nasty, brutish and short. There was no doubt about it. Whatever yardstick was used to compare ourselves with the Australian Aborigines as well as with other hunting and gathering tribes, they were far behind.

During the past twenty years anthropologists such as Woodburn, Lee and Devore have drastically changed our thinking about the quality of life among hunters and gatherers, particularly those in Africa. We now know that, with a few exceptions, they do not have a hard time in the business of getting a living. It would be unusual for them to have to spend on the average more than a few hours a day in obtaining ample food. They are not constantly on the move in the quest for food. In comparison to many small agricultural communities they do not have a precarious life. They have abundant leisure. Whatever may be the reason for their lack of much cultural furniture it is not for want of leisure. And once past the childhood diseases life is not short. Nor is it brutish and nasty.

Geoffrey Blainey, in his interesting book, sets out to show that in ancient Australia—the period before Europeans appeared on the scene—neither the physical environment nor the social-economic environment was static. He frequently compares the Australian Aborigines with ourselves to see who comes out best. Professor Blainey draws his information from fellow historians, zoologists, archaeologists and anthropologists; but there is no indication that he attempted to obtain information directly from the Aborigines. Perhaps I am wrong, but I would have thought that a face-to-face meeting with his subject is what every historian dreams of.

The old problem about the origins of the Australian Aborigines and the Tasmanians is discussed. The sea level some 30,000 to 40,000 years ago was much lower than it is today, so New Guinea, Australia and Tasmania formed one land mass. While Professor Blainey appreciates the dangers, he points out that the journey from the islands of the Indonesian archipelago by fishermen on flimsy rafts would not have been so dangerous, nor as long, as it would be today on similar craft. There is a certain amount of vivid historical conjecture about the first journeys and the gradual populating of Australia; the point is well taken that the journeys may not have been all one way.

Natural changes in the physical environment, such as the rising of the sea level, would have had profound effects on the coastal tribes. Professor Blainey argues that the Aborigines in turn caused considerable changes in their physical surroundings by their hunting and gathering and particularly in their use of fire. "If the hundreds of small independent aboriginal societies which once occupied Australia had adopted a coat of arms, an appropriate emblem would have been a firestick." If I may draw upon my own experiences in Northern Queensland, the different voices concerning fire of Aborigines and European station owners (and missionaries) were constantly brought to my attention. The station owners regarded bush fires as bad for the stock, especially at the end of the dry season when there was a scarcity of feed; the Aborigines regarded bush fires as good for the country, especially at the end of the dry season before the rainy season. Professor Blainey also mentions that apart from causing changes in the flora—bush fires, for example, brought about a more rapid spread of some eucalyptus seeds—the Aborigines also caused changes in the fauna. They may have been directly or indirectly responsible for the disappearance of some of the giant marsupials, as well as the Tasmanian tiger and the Tasmanian devil on the mainland.

Sometimes Professor Blainey allows his imagination to drift unchecked. For example, when discussing some graves in South Australia he suggests:

It is likely that the children in the double grave were victims of ritual infanticide. They had been sacrificed not because their mothers had died but because the beliefs and rituals of the group maintained that the burial of certain adults should be accompanied by the sacrifice of a child. How widely the Aborigines practised ritual infanticide is unknown. The ritual is illuminating, for it hints that the curbs on aboriginal population arose from social customs as well as from neandic necessity.

As I mentioned, Professor Blainey frequently compares the Aborigines with ourselves; sometimes we come out better, sometimes worse. Surprisingly enough, in warfare we seem to come out better. Using Warner's data on the Murngin, he calculates that from 1909 to 1929 about one person in every 300 was killed through warfare in north-eastern Arnhem Land. This is about six times the rate of the United States in the Second World War. As far as food is concerned we come out decidely worse.

In a normal year the aborigines in many parts of the continent ate a variety of plant foods such as no present greengrocer or fruiterer in an Australian city would hope to display. His shop, even with those foods which had been refrigerated or air-freighted, could not match the variety of plant foods eaten in a typical year by wandering aboriginals. In the Cape York region at least 141 species of plants were known to yield food to aboriginals. In that region 73 different fruits and 46 different roots were eaten. Add 19 kinds of nuts and seeds, 11 varieties of green leaves and shoots and the list is probably not complete.

Triumph of the Nomads is worth reading; I think the title, however, was ill-chosen, not because the Aborigines did not triumph (for there is no doubt that they did, just as there is no doubt that they will cope with Europeans), but because it gives the impression that they were constantly on the move. Since Professor Blainey likes to make comparisons between us and them, perhaps he will not take it amiss if I extract a leaf from his book. The real nomads are people like myself who travel hundreds of miles each week commuting to and out of London in order to get the wherewithal for food and shelter.

Finally, I would like to make a remark about hunting and gathering versus agriculture. Professor Blainey considers it a puzzle that the Aborigines "did not adopt the custom of cultivating plants and keeping herds". He indicates that he is going to investigate this puzzle in a separate work. It would seem that the full significance of his data has not really reached him. So perhaps he would not mind if a Wik-munkan Londoner gave him a tip. The puzzle is not why the Australian aborigines never domesticated animals and plants, but why other societies did so.

Survivors in the sand

By Lucy Mair

DONALD THOMSON:
Bindibu Country
172pp and 53 illustrations. Nelson (Australia). $A9.95.

Donald Thomson was an anthropologist, but *Bindibu Country* is more like an odyssey than an ethnographic report; it has nothing to say about kinship terminology or marriage classes, and its attractive frontispiece is Thomson's own map of the journey he made in 1957. His aim was to observe the way of life of desert dwellers in contrast to that of the hunter-gatherers of well-watered regions whom he already knew. Bindibu country is in the Great Sandy Desert of central Western Australia, the last part of the continent to be explored, which was named only in 1872. The earlier explorers were more interested in camels than sheep, Warburton in 1872 and Carnegie in 1896 both recorded the heavy loss to the people. Warburton's party finally ate their camels.

Thomson had motor transport, and radio contact with the Royal Australian Air Force, which dropped him additional supplies of food and petrol. But motor transport is not in every way superior to camel transport. Land-Rovers need less water but more petrol; they cannot follow a compass course, and when they are bogged down they have to wait for rain and a sandstorm can blow them out of action. Thomson spent a week in the most remote corner of Australia, Thomson's party was deluged by rainstorms at night.

A band of about forty Bindibu camped near Thomson's base. None spoke any English, but they readily showed him anything that they understood he wanted to see, and obviously communication improved as time went on. His training as a biologist enabled him to identify the flora of their environment and the species they used for food; and he followed with close observation their techniques for making weapons and utensils, which they went out of their way to show him.

For animal protein the Bindibu dug in the sand for lizards the size of small sardines and jerboas little larger than house mice; they killed flocks of budgerigars, and sometimes larger birds, with throwing-sticks when they gathered to feed or drink; they ate truffles and witchetty grubs. Occasionally they got a kangaroo or an emu. Thomson comments more than once on the fat, healthy babies, though he remarks that life is hard for the mothers who suckle them up to five or six years old.

A series of Thomson's photographs illustrates stages in the manufacture of a spear-thrower; others show the making of bark sandals, and of resin. There are pictures of camp shelters, grinding stones, and coolamons, the scooped out pieces of wood used to carry food, water or babies.

This book is published five years after Thomson's death, and it is not clear whether he intended this to be its final form. The conclusion is implicit: that people who have developed the necessary knowledge and skills can face the harshest environment with confidence, and that their life is preferable to that of their fellows who have become dependent on the rations and wages offered by white men.

Dangerous corners

by Neil McInnes

ROBIN GOLLAN:
Revolutionaries and Reformists
Communism and the Australian Labour Movement 1920-1955
338pp. Richmond Publishing Co. £6.90.

A study of the interaction of communists and the Australian labour movement has a much wider field to cover than a British or American reader might suspect. For, although communists were as few in Australia as elsewhere in the English-speaking world (23,000 at the height of the Red Army cult in 1943, down to 6,000 in 1952, and negligible splinter groups today), their influence in the Australian Labor Party and in the trade unions was at times extensive. At the end of the war, one estimate has it that communists controlled or largely influenced unions to which 40 per cent of organised workers belonged, and they went on to use that control or influence in frankly political, non-professional issues. The ALP also was (as a creature of those same unions) it was bound to be) heavily infiltrated by communists, to the point where its branch in the most populous state, New South Wales, actually merged with the Communist Party after sundry spites and crises. This "white-ants" (in the graphic Australian expression) of the unions and the ALP led to the rise of the Catholic-inspired "Movement" which purged the labour movement of communist influence, at the cost of splitting it and sending it into the political wilderness for a generation.

This is the subject of Robin Gollan's book, from which the foreign reader can derive much information (all of it subject to later verification) and, more important, a taste of the characteristic flavour of Australian politics. The book suffers the usual disabilities of studies of interaction: it is not about the Communist Party, nor the ALP, nor even the labour movement, but about some instances where they came in conflict. Thus it overlooks the intervening history of those entities and, to set the stage for each incident it treats of, it has to fill in the background, both in national and European politics. Dr Gollan spends so much time doing this (other than he occasionally loses the thread and then, finding it again, produces some lamentable incongruities—such as hopping from a vast fresco of world events to squabbles in the Melbourne University Labor Club. However, as William James said, the art of reading is knowing when to skip, and the European reader will soon recognize the passages where Dr Gollan is filling in background.

Actually, the fault of much Australian political analysis is the opposite one, that of leaving out the world context. That error is impossible to make when dealing with communists, because they are avowedly a part of a world movement. When L. L. Sharkey, the local communist boss, said in 1949 that the workers would "welcome" a Soviet invading force, he was echoing what Maurice Thorez had said just before, so one has to take in the world picture. It was not always so evident to Australians that their leftism of the 1930s was a perverting of the Left Book Club, that ALP policies after the war were taken straight from Beveridge and Keynes, nor even that the conservatives had no ideas whatsoever on foreign policy and internal security except a blind loyalty to a British Empire that no longer existed. As Ernest Renan would have said, they were living on the perfume of an empty vase.

Moreover, the sometimes tiresome emphasis on the world context has the advantage of showing just how and when Australian history began to hive off from British history, and then even from European history, to become an independent story on which some of the outside influences came not from Britain or Europe but from America and, latterly, Asia. This is a matter best studied from the left point of view, as in Dr Gollan's book, for there is no doubt that Australian nationalism is a creation of the labour movement.

It was a creation that the right bitterly scorned and opposed, and which the communists, with their subservience to yet another foreign power, did nothing to assist. Dr Gollan tells the story fairly, but with too little sympathy for the right. He perhaps does not realize to what extent the conservatives' neurosis about treason, between 1945 and 1955, their picture of the left as a bunch of traitors manipulated by the communists, stemmed from their grief at having to surrender an exclusive loyalty to a quaintly outdated vision of Britain.

The left, then, was certainly the "party of initiative", and the right the "party of resistance", in foreign policy, but Dr Gollan falls into an old trap by extending this division to all politics. The ALP, with its communist infiltrators acting as an effective ginger group, becomes the party of progress, in social, economic and constitutional affairs, while the right can do nothing but say no. Thus, his account of the epic battles over the nationalization of the banks and the introduction of a socialist health service is unashamedly partisan, being vitiated by the claim "that the labour movement was the bearer of the highest moral values in Australian society". Dr Gollan has no feeling for the "moral value" of loyalty, which has been the governing passion of the Australian right. Nor has he for many other "values" that were at stake in the struggle to purge the unions of communists and to protect free enterprise and states' rights. This might be the time to mention that Dr Gollan is an ex-communist, but not yet enough to concede that neo-capitalism in the past generation has provided much welfare, social justice and progress in Australia.

Still, I think the main impression the foreign reader will retain from this book, even after he has forgotten the details of Dr Gollan's story, is not a partisan one, but an uneasy feeling that Dr Gollan has told an ugly story and left one wondering about the security of Australian democracy. None of the parties he describes is very attractive—or, if you think that is true of every nation's political life, then Australia's all seem peculiarly repulsive. Of his "hero", Dr Gollan says, "the ALP . . . has not been deeply committed to civil liberties", a fact illustrated by its reluctance to oppose the dissolution of the Communist Party by Menzies in 1950. Equally disturbing, what is one to think of a supposedly democratic mass party that lets itself be white-anted first by the communists and then by the fanatically anti-communist Catholics? The battle within the ALP and the unions between the two equally unscrupulous, secretive and authoritarian forces is scarcely a sign of health in the "bearer of moral values" that is the ALP. Dr Gollan says: "In the course of this struggle the two machines fought each other with almost no consideration for loyalty, or cost to principle". The phrase "almost" seems redundant. And not forget that for Dr Gollan, for many Australian leftists, the communists, whom he admits to be authoritarian and secretive, were the saving grace of an opportunistic and sometimes illiberal ALP.

Needless to say, the slight does not come off any better in Dr Gollan's treatment and, although he felts to see what drove the right to its excesses (e.g. that it only rightfully feared and detested communism), he is quite accurate in describing those excesses. I mentioned above how Sharkey echoed Thorez, but whereas Thorez was abused and threatened in the Assemblée nationale, Sharkey was convicted and sentenced to three years' jail. (He served eighteen months.) It is clear that Menzies, for a period, was a McCarthyite, with whom one had the usual trouble in separating sincere conviction from the basest political ruse. But McCarthy was a mere senator, and Menzies was Prime Minister.

This political dirty work went on in what Dr Gollan calls "an almosphere of extreme intolerance" and "oppressive illiberalism", which says little for the Australian regard for democratic principles. Dr Gollan may be exaggerating when he says that Australia in 1951 had a narrow escape from a police state, but the ingredients were all there.

Nothing since the year 1950, when Dr Gollan stops his account on the grounds that by then the communists were a spent force, has dispelled this impression. Indeed, last year's constitutional crisis has remanifested many of the fears Dr Gollan's book recalls. The communists may have disappeared from the scene, but what Professor Francois Revel calls "the temptation of totalitarianism" remains a permanent feature of the Australian landscape. A notion whose right is authoritarian, secretive and conspicuously of trenchery, whose left is demagogic, antisemitic, anti-intellectual and occasionally scornful of legal forms, and whose public opinion is intolerant, xenophobic, illiberal or indifferent (and that is not only the nation described by Dr Gollan but the nation of Frederick and Whitlam) is one that risks having an experience of totalitarian rule sooner or later.

Northern defences

By Michael Leifer

RUPERT LOCKWOOD:
Black Armada.
352pp. Australasian Book Society. [illegible]

W. J. HUDSON (Editor):
Australia's New Guinea Question
163pp. Nelson. In association with the Australian Institute of International Affairs. $A9.95.

Black Armada is a somewhat misleading title for a book which could have been more appropriately called "Blackad Armada". The blacking in question was in the trade-union sense of the word, and it took the form of a boycott of Dutch shipping by Australian stevedores in the wake of the proclamation of Indonesian independence in August 1945. During the Pacific war, Australia served as the seat of government of the Netherlands East Indies administration and also as the place of exile for a number of Indonesian political prisoners returned in West New Guinea. These prisoners were, in the main, members of the Indonesian Communist Party who had been arrested in the years after the abortive rebellion in 1926-27. In Australia, some of these prisoners established contact with communist activists within the trade union movement who led a successful campaign to secure their release into useful wartime occupations. This alliance took on a greater significance when, in September 1945, Indonesian sailors refused to man Dutch ships bound for Indonesia. It was at this juncture that Australian trade union involvement served to obstruct alternative attempts to get the ships to sea.

Rupert Lockwood, who observed these events as associate editor of *The Tribune*, published by the Australian Communist Party, has two evident purposes in recounting them. One is to demonstrate the extent to which the blacking of the Dutch ships transporting men and armaments proved a decisive stimulus in the initial attempts to restore colonial rule. The other is to illustrate the circumstances of Australia's political awakening to its location on the periphery of a changing South-East Asia.

Rupert Lockwood gives a ponderous account of the central episodes, delving into the minutiae of what was a minor aspect of the struggle for Indonesian independence. Indeed, he tends to exaggerate the significance of the boycott he does not put it into proper perspective, and this is because he fails to provide a balanced assessment of the role of Admiral Lord Mountbatten, the Allied Supreme Commander with responsibility for the occupation of the Netherlands East Indies after the Japanese surrender. As commander on the spot, he played the decisive role in shaping the initial course of events. Because of his previous experience in dealing with the Burmese nationalists, and because of his perceptive assessment of the political and military situation in Indonesia, Mountbatten was determined to set in train negotiations between the Indonesian nationalists and the Dutch before permitting any major investment of their forces. The Foreign Office papers available in the Public Record Office make it plain that, from the outset, Mountbatten urged the representatives of the Dutch to negotiate with the leaders of the embryo republic, and that the British Government was obliged to move to his position rather than to sustain its formal commitment to colonial restoration.

That book is more accurate in its depiction of the ambivalence in practical policy of the Australian Labor Government, which tolerated an illegal boycott against a wartime ally while continuing to provide it with facilities, including military equipment. In his discussion of the Australian role, the author seeks to show that it was the initiative of the trade unionists which pointed the way to a realistic foreign policy. The latter chapters are devoted to the ill-considered attitudes towards Indonesia of the Liberal-Country Party Governments which took office from 1949. In this context Lockwood discusses the "episode" of the blockade of 1945—the refusal of West Australian dockers to service the Dutch aircraft carrier, Karel Doormann, which had sought harbour in the Swan estuary on its way to show the flag in West New Guinea at the height of the dispute over that territory with Indonesia. While there is much to be said for the argument put forward concerning the orientation of Australian foreign policy, the author tends to spoil his case by a tendentious use of evidence. One example implying Australian culpability is his assertion: "President Soekarno's adventurous confrontation with Malaysia later on was due in part to use of Malayan territories, where Australian troops were stationed with British, as a base for the anti-Republican insurgents."

In *Black Armada*, Rupert Lockwood illustrates the place of New Guinea in the strategic thinking of the Liberal-Country Party in Australia. He quotes Sir Percy Spender, a former Minister for External Affairs, who proclaimed that "New Guinea has been shown to present the very key to Australia's defence". It is ironic that approximately twenty years later, Eastern or Papua New Guinea won virtually thrust into independence by an Australian Government, if of a very different disposition to that to which Spender belonged. *Australia's New Guinea Question* is a collection of essays by Australian academics written in 1973 with the independence which came in 1975 very much in mind.

Organized into three sections, dealing with internal circumstances, the nature of prospective international relationships and the various associations with its former guardian-power, this book provides a succinct and informative assessment of the relevance of an independent Papua New Guinea to Australia. Among the authors of the eight essays there is a shared view of the fragile condition of the new state arising from its multitude of social particularisms. As Edward Wolfers points out in his thoughtful chapter entitled "State of the Nation", Papua New Guinea is a state without a nation. And it is one in which increasing dissent may be expected against the so-called inheritance elite. More explicitly, A. M. Healey, in discussing the administrative model most directly applicable to Australia's pre-independance role, singles out Belgium colonial practice and continues to the fearful analogy of the Congo.

In a number of the subsequent chapters, there is reference to the likely role of the military within Papua New Guinea in maintaining effective government and civil order. As Mediansky, in the last chapter, on defence advocates a rejection of professional military values for an army which he suggests is almost certain to become involved in politics, he has the contrast between its own cohesion and the fragmented nature of Papua New Guinea society. While there is general agreement that the strategic significance of Papua New Guinea has changed for Australia in the sense that it is no longer regarded as a stepping-stone for aggression, the severance of all defence links is not advocated. The Australian Government, which sponsored the independence of New Guinea did not seek to retain military access and was reluctant also to contemplate any internal security role. Yet, as Mediansky points out, Papua New Guinea's underlying military dependence on Australia, in terms of support costs and logistics, means that any involvement by the military in politics must involve Australia, because the Papua New Guinea Defence Force is not viable without external assistance.

He argues that "so long as Australia gives financial, technical or capital assistance to the Papua New Guinea Defence Forces, it cannot hope to dissociate itself from the political acts of the military, no matter what form the post-independence military links take". The justification for this is that undue military dissociation could well endanger the unity of the country by wrecking its most effective institution, described here as the only backstop for national unity.

There is additional irony in this reasoning. *Australia's New Guinea Question* was prompted by policies towards Papua New Guinea which arose from a fundamental reappraisal of its strategic significance for Australia. Yet the granting of independence cannot put Papua New Guinea out of Australia's sight or mind. Its strategic significance may well have changed but its location and internal circumstances have not. The course of events within the new state remain of major significance for Australia, if only because its most important neighbour, Indonesia, exercises less than effective control over the western half of the island.

Change of Meaning

The mystery in the word
changes things around—the blade
becomes a plough, and lips
repeating it launch battleships.

Is the mystery in "forgotten"?
A snick of consonants and then
the head lolling on a broken neck?
From here there's no way back.

More happens with "remembered."
Comparisons fill the head—
This word can draw in aphorism
like a rainbow from a chasm.

Remember? We peered down the wall
and at first saw nothing at all—
which soon became an apple, unpeeled,
and then the astronaut's world:

The awkward awkward awkward day
smoothes over. This is a demonstration of how
rough stone spinning through air
becomes a sphere.

Roger McDonald

Recollection and distance

By William Walsh

R. F. BRISSENDEN:
Building a Terrace
55pp. Canberra: Australian National University Press. Paperback, $A2.50.

HAL FORTER:
In an Australian Country Graveyard
45pp. Melbourne: Thomas Nelson. $A4.50.

It was only some thirty years ago, as the edoinrably keen-sighted Geoffrey Dutton pointed out, that the critics brewied about the kind of poetry that ought to represent the Australian sensibility. There were the nationalists, who would have liked every suburban garden to have its own goanna and witchetty-grube; the Angry Penguins, who thought Guernica closer than Wagga Wagga . . . and the neo-classicists . . . who recommended a strict walk dowe the iambics. . . ." If there was a victory it was gained by the neo-classicists.

The three most distinguished of Australian poets, Kenneth Slessor, A. D. Hope and James McAuley, all wanted to extricate Australia from the bland and parochial provincialism of the Victorians. They were all conservative: Slessor a sceptical conservative, Hope a radical conservative, McAuley a religious conservative. These poets did for Australia, a country incidentally in which the prose has throughout its history been steadily superior to the poetry, what Eliot did in Britain, although in a less intense and more formal way. All of them had convictions about the necessary presence in poetry of intellect, criticism and learning, and a preference for a more conscious and elaborate verbal structure. All of them were apt in weaker moments to fall into a bolletristic euphony of an oratorically archaic sort. All too were of a cautious and reserved habit of feeling. The passion and the flourish of the Australian spirit had gone into its prose. There is no poetic talent at all comparable with Patrick White's. It must, therefore, have been an extremely difficult thing for a newer poet to escape the Slessor/Hope temperament and manner, and R. F. Brissenden in *Building a Terrace* has not, I think, succeeded in doing so.

R. F. Brissenden is a scholarly critic of Australian literature—he has written a fine essay on Patrick White—and he composes disciplined and unimpassioned poetry. Not, that is to say, that there is not genuina and sometimes impressive feeling, but the idiom, the management of tone, the handling of metaphor make for a poetry of recollective and distance. It seems to me significant that so many poems should be provoked by pictures ("The Van Gogh Exhibition" and "A River Remembered"), or other poets ("Variations on a Line from Judith Wright" "Reading a Poem on the Death of Shelley", "Three Poems for Kenneth Slessor", "Letter to Yevtushenko"), literary or aesthetic dates ("A Voyage to Cythera"). The experiences in these poems, plangent, civilized, and orderly, succeed, when they do succeed, in touching a nerve of affectionate recognition; they do not invade one or overwhelm one. Here is a characteristic piece, "The Stake, 1633":

(After an engraving by Jacques Callot)":

The casual elegance, the careless grace
With which the tall young cavalier commands
The scene is what we notice first: he stands
At ease, assured, pointing a slender mace
Towards the burning man. His King Charles face
Under the plumed hat looks tough. His friends
Leen on their pikes or rest their idle hands
On swords and muskets. In the lifting space
Before them soldiers work—one starts to make
A grave; one, setting down his lute end drum,
Piles on more faggots, covering his eyes
Against the flames; another, at the stake,
Strains tight the ropes about the men whose dumb
Face turns in torment to the empty skies.

What these mild and pleasant lines suggest to the reader is an academic presence. Academic poetry tends to be correct and decorative, to fail itself under the obligation to import significance, usually by means of reference to the achievements of others. Academics necessarily have to use the labour of other men. One notices this academic bias in art particularly in countries like Australia which, despite being a rich nation of 11 million people, has been unable to support a class of professional writers and where, in consequence, writers are almost invariably found in some academic context. In many ways the academic profession is a distinctly dangerous one for the poet. His literary knowledge, his scholastic memory, his sense of the subject persistently intrude between him and his experiences. He is apt to be gratuitously explicit,

. . . and I think of two dead men:
My grandfather Will Rogers, and Archimedes.
"Give me a lever", he said, "and I'll shift the world".

or solemnly sincere like a public orator presuming for an honorary degree (e.g. "For A. D. Hope, OBE"). The best of these poems are those in which an object bulks large, an activity occupies the whole space, or a landscape dominates: for example, "The Major's Garden", the first part of "Rathcutters Bay", "Losing His Grip" and "Building a Terrace". In these and similar poems there is less room for the assumption of an attitude derived from a literary manner, and the too conscious subjectivity of the academic poet is subdued by something hard and busy and outside.

Hal Porter's *In an Australian Country Graveyard* is a handsome book, the cover of which bears a self-portrait by its handsome author, and the body of which is pieced out with some ten other drawings, some of them distinctly less handsome. Henry Jamesie perhaps in one of his more anti-Dickensian moods, wrote firmly about illustrations in the novel:

Anything that relieves responsible prose of the duty of being, while placed before us, good enough, interesting enough, and if the question be of picture, pictorial enough, above all true in itself, does it the worst of services, and may well inspire in the lover of literature certain lively questions as to the future of that institution.

If this is true of responsible prose, how much truer of responsible poetry, and certainly "Bachelor" in the series provoked by the graveyard conveys more of the sour gauntness of Victorian celibacy than its accompanying drawing, just as "The Married Couple" in the same set is so much more eloquent of domestic hatred than the costly beaded beads of husband, wife and skulls in the illustration.

The admirable thing about Hal Porter is his independence. If there is nothing profound in the poems, neither is there anything conventional. They are written in a bounding ballad form and they have something in them of Betjemen's blend of the old-fashioned and the grotesque, but with a tighter grip and a finer edge. Hal Porter came at long last to be aware of the flawless dangers of the academic limetree bower. He was a schoolmaster from 1927 to 1952 and a librarian from 1952 to 1962, but since that time he has been a professional writer, and his work has the energy and the salutary concentration of the men primarily engaged with the work in hand. He is the author of novels, plays and short stories, and of a particularly vital and unsentimental evocation of his childhood in *The Watcher on the Cast-Iron Balcony*. His poems, too, are robust, lively and individual:

Each kiosk's rusted shut. The side-line's fringed
with kelp, wrack, trawler muck.
It's later
than he thinks, the one-eyed odd-job-man,
who, wine-hot in the rain-wet caravan,
ewelts his sbo, skin-and-bone Lolita.
The tide's today run wryer than they ran—
the
time's
unhinged.

As these lines hint and others show more strongly, Hal Porter has the real poet's power to make syntax work for him. But he has also a gift, unusual in modern verse, of creating a buoyant and convincing character. It shows itself in the poetry in this volume in a peculiar success in transplanting actuality into art. He has a highly subjective manner but it is always the servant and not the bully of what his eye is. How accurate and living is the dead spinster who dreams of Prince Charming:

He never came.

Her headstone not on show,
her name in secret falls to flakes
behind the fragile and transparent stelae
of summer's air-light grade, which nearly shakes
again and now
so privily, above the cool and coupling snakes,
so faintly that the eye alone hears
Thou!

How do you spell poet?

By Ronald Tamplin

GEOFF PAGE:
Smalltown Memorials
60pp. £2.20 (paperback, 95p).

ROGER MCDONALD:
Airship
64pp. £2.20 (paperback, 95p).

DAVID ROWBOTHAM:
Selected Poems
80pp. £4.95 (paperback, £2.45).

RICHARD TIPPING:
Domestic Hardcore
60pp. £2.20 (paperback, 95p).

THOMAS W. SHAPCOTT:
Contemporary American and Australian Poetry
80pp. £9.60 (paperback, £6.20).
Leicester: University of Queensland Press. Distributed in UK by Prentice Hall.

JOHN BILIGHT:
Bat
[illegible]
[illegible]pp. Nelson (Australia).

Geoff Page's *Smalltown Memorials* is an exciting book from a maturing poet. He takes the simple and receives way with his portion of Australian experience — brief moments of characters, scenes and landscapes which carry, unforced within themselves, their larger occasions. Henry Lawson would have approved. Page establishes his environment, as in the title poem, sometimes not even as town, but a weekend of houses and tiny unlikely trees [illegible] to a back road,
[illegible] from it derives, in this case, [illegible] responses to two world wars:

[illegible] best-bequeathed us
[illegible] and pools
[illegible] something in that first
[illegible] stone.

[illegible] whether personally or [illegible] directed, is sustained, not [illegible] reflex but by meditation. [illegible] move towards loss in death, [illegible] marriage. The lives of loved [illegible] members are "rolled/with [illegible] control/towards the jack". [illegible] is set within restrained [illegible] and, at times, a quiet [illegible] short line is [illegible] and helps keep [illegible] uncluttered. [illegible] is a [illegible] of compassionate [illegible] deserves a wide [illegible]

[illegible] Roger McDonald's *Airship* consolidates the promise of *Citizens of Mist*. He writes from a sense of separately realized objects which he compels into a meticulously placed-together universe. Some poems, "Components" and "Argument, with explanations" come across like tense, hard-edged paintings. There is a preoccupation with the First World War and with small farming communities, but McDonald's starting-points extend widely into fantasy, science fiction and unusually angled poems like "An exploded view of a tree". The central concern is again with loss and, more emphatically, growth. McDonald's imagery is demanding and a little cloaked. Occasionally there is more finish than end, partly because ends are not always very clear in what is given us, and this, allied to metaphysical speculation arising from vividly regarded physical objects, sometimes (as in "Lenses") gives an atmosphere of a tinted Kafka. But, as with Page, there is a wry hope, much in the Australian grain. With the sun "intent/on baking the undersides of aronae"

I'll leave these lines wedged in a slice of asbestos
for you to find, with luck, in the
event of autumn.

John Bilight was born in 1913 and established his reputation with two books of sonnets in the 1960s, which used the sea as their central image. In *Bat* he has resolutely moved inland and into a more modern idiom but conveys a bitter distaste for it all, as of a solitary without peace. Long preoccupation with the sonnet makes him overstress the endings of poems so that he more often sets up attitudes than responses. And the attitudes are too close to those of a cynical and out-of-tune conservationist. One poem, however, "For Francesca", is so good that there must be whole areas open to Bilight if, rather than document his attitudes, he would let them speak his pulse.

Francesca I now in the early hours
when death is the natural animal,
and my skin seems black as yours,
I light
my lamp, the pale leprosy of whose
glow
disturbs my after-midnight sleep. . . .

David Rowbotham's *Selected Poems* is welcome, giving a chance to assess a poet whose contribution to Australian writing has been constant and painstaking since 1946. He has tended to hover between landscape and a metaphysics abstraction from it which leads him to turn experience to vaguely ethereal adventure, a deliberate shaping that starn rhyme schemes have accentuated in him. Whenever he uses quatrains, as in "Dust", "The Towo", "The Rock" and "Prey to Prey", he is much more compelling. Impressively, some of his latest poems seem to expand to new syntheses as if from beneath a crushing weight of training. Poems such as "Instrument" and "Associations" should be pit straight into the anthologies. Rowbotham's endeavour throughout his writing life reveals much of the Australian situation, the growth, in some degree of isolation, to an individual, perhaps over-careful, voice.

Richard Tipping, the youngest writer here and on his second book, is less a victim of isolation than of the other Australian hazard, internationalism by design. The pursuit is to realisation through poetry and alternative experience. Poetry is internationally depersonalized in pursuit of personality. It shoots "from the hip" and the mannerisms of hip style scarcely conceal thin lyricism. The minimal structure of such poetry is a device for combining a succession of rapid insights and platform statements, and the poetry must depend largely on the power of the insights. That power is the difference between the best (though not the worst) of Blake and the children of Albion and environs. Tipping has a reputation as a powerful reader but on the page the power disappears. Poetry does not survive platform. He sees the "poem in the mind" as "challenging himself/& the english language/to a fight to the death/for beauty, & for change". In the battle fought in *Domestic Hardcore* language is a born loser ("ageless /beauteous/particular ledescribable/essential absolute") but there are signs he could yet get on top, notably in "Brayswick Fields" and "Against, or For Beauty". If Tipping would give himself a chance.

Thomas Shapcott's useful anthology, *Contemporary American and Australian Poetry*, shows up the important parallels between American and Australian experience, which the Vietnam War and the European Common Market have accentuated and Europeans tend not to realize. It helps put in perspective an Australian poetic experience which is uneven but has range, quality and excitement. When Richard Tipping opened his Fellowship bank account in Australia the teller asked him, "How do you spell poet?" It is a good question which Australians have still not the insight to ask and feel the need to answer.

In battle order

By Russell Meiggs

W. KENDRICK PRITCHETT :
The Greek State at War
314pp. University of California Press. £6.85.

Though all Greek histories make it clear that interstate warfare was an endemic disease in Greece, surprisingly little attention has been paid to the social and economic aspects of war: many discussions of Greek democracy seem to overlook the fact that there was no sharp distinction between the civilian and the military. W. Kendrick Pritchett's two volumes of military studies are a useful reminder that war is not merely a matter of pitched battles. In his first volume, published in 1971 (*Ancient Greek Military Practices*), he was concerned with economic aspects such as pay, provisions and booty, and more narrowly military aspects of battle. In this second volume, *The Greek State at War*, the longest chapters deal with the relation of military leaders to the civil authority, especially in the fourth century; shorter studies follow on miscellaneous subjects including fortified camps, military training and discipline. Professor Pritchett's procedure, as in Part I, is to collect, and in suitable cases to tabulate, the evidence and to infer the conclusions without the contamination of modern theory.

Sometimes the comprehensive collection of relevant passages merely confirms what would be generally expected, but in other cases there is a stimulating challenge to new thinking. In the first chapter all references to the trials of generals are analysed. Treachery and bribery were the commonest charges, but whatever the formulation of the charge the dominant factor was military success or failure, and political feelings tended to be more influential than the letter of the law. Unfortunately nearly all references to trials are very brief and we rarely know what arguments were deployed. When three Athenian generals who had been sent to fight in Sicily returned to Athens in 424 because the Sicilian states had agreed to make a common peace and not accept Athenian intervention, two of them were exiled and the third was fined. The charge, according to Thucydides, was that they had been bribed to quit Sicily. He implies that they were condemned because the people, in a buoyant mood after capturing Spartan prisoners on Sphacteria, imagined that they could have conquered Sicily. Is it right to argue from Thucydides's silence that the generals were not accused also of making a peace with the Sicilians with specific terms without the authority of the people?

The third chapter, on the condottieri of the fourth century, is the most rewarding. The generally accepted portrait of Athenian democracy in the fourth century is derived mainly from Demosthenes. The century is generally described as a period of moral decline, when citizens left the fighting to mercenaries and tended to do too little too late. This, it is widely thought, was most clearly exemplified in the change in the character of the generals, who were no longer the active statesmen of the fifth century but professional soldiers relying largely on mercenaries, independent of the home authorities and selfishly pursuing their own interests. The rigorous review of the evidence here assembled shows beyond doubt that the independence of fourth-century military leaders, Spartan and Theban as well as Athenian, has been grossly exaggerated. Even Charidemus of Oreus in Euboea, who in his early career seems to have been little more than an unscrupulous adventurer, served Athens loyally when he had been given Athenian citizenship. When King Agesilaus took an army to Egypt to support a revolt against the Persians (but, incidentally, can *epi symmachion*, on page 45, mean "in accordance with an alliance"?) he was sent out by the Spartan authorities. It is true that the forcible exactions of Athenian generals from allies and independent states were one of the main causes of the widespread revolt of the allies in the middle of the century, but the responsibility rested with the authorities at home who provided insufficient finance to maintain fleets or armies on campaigns. They realized clearly enough that the generals had no alternative.

The most conspicuous example of the problems that could arise is the action of Chares during the war against the allies. After the Athenian defeat at the battle of Embata, the two colleagues of Chares were recalled to Athens; Chares took his men to Asia Minor and sold their support to the Persian satrap at Sardis who was in revolt. The result was good pay for the troops but a dangerous involvement in Persian affairs. When the Persian king protested to Athens, Chares was told to withdraw his force and obeyed. In spite of many court cases against him he was always acquitted. In Demosthenes's attacks on the generals there is clearly both exaggeration and distortion. It is clear also that Athens used citizen hoplites more than Demosthenes implies and that in comparing his own day with fifth-century Athens he unrealistically idealizes the past, but is his analysis completely misleading? With firmer financial policies at home she could have retained the goodwill of her allies and Olynthus was much too important to be supported at first by mercenaries alone.

In "The Challenge to Battle" and the two following chapters Professor Pritchett emphasizes the rarity of surprise attacks and ambushes in Greek warfare of the classical period and the almost normal pattern of armies encamped opposite one another waiting until one or both decide to come out and fight. By accepted convention that was still the way that wars should be fought. A fifth-century treaty could still provide for a challenge to fight for disputed territory.

The last two chapters, on the battlefield trophy and the Aristeia, raise interesting questions. Professor Pritchett is not concerned with commemorative memorials, whether on the battlefield, as at Marathon, or in a temple or some public place, but with the wooden structure on which enemy arms were hung, set up immediately after the battle, signifying the rout of the enemy and the control of the land, carrying with it the refusal of the enemy to admit defeat by suing for the recovery of the dead. Two features will have escaped general notice. Whatever the origin of the custom, the trophy is protected by religion and may not be destroyed when the victor returns to his own land. The other strange feature is that, though Thucydides records the setting up of such trophies on fifty-eight occasions, and Xenophon in his *Hellenica* on thirty occasions, there is no example in Herodotus. Conversely, though Herodotus frequently mentions the Aristeia awarded in battle against the Persians and describes the voting by the generals for the Aristeia after the battle of Salamis, there is no mention of the conferment of Aristeia in Thucydides. The explanation offered, that "the amount of investigation needed to ascertain the names of the individuals would have been enormous and the results of interest only to the recipient and their families", seems barely consistent with Thucydides' passion for detail and accuracy.

It may be that, partly in conscious reaction against Herodotus, he thought that the brave acts of individuals who were not leaders were not historically important; an easier solution might be that, as Adcock suggested, Aristeia in the sense of single awards to the bravest men were not compatible with hoplites fighting in phalanx. Similarly Herodotus may have omitted the setting up of a trophy on the battlefield of Plataea because none was in fact set up.

Professor Pritchett's two books on the military side of Greek life provide an admirable foundation for further work on areas of city state life which tend to be neglected. In his Introduction he holds out the hope that he will ultimately correlate his work on aspects of war with his topographical investigations, to assess the relative reliability of the various Greek historians not only in their accounts of battles, but in their general treatment of military matters. Such a book will be very warmly welcomed.

Political realities

By M. F. Burnyeat

LEO STRAUSS :
The Argument and the Action of Plato's Laws
186pp. University of Chicago Press. £5.90.

PLATO :
Philebus
Translated with notes and commentary by J. C. B. Gosling
238pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £6 (paperback, £2.25).

Two dialogues from Plato's last period, the *Laws* and the *Philebus*, two very different styles of commentary. The late Leo Strauss's work on the *Laws* is mainly a summary of its contents, in language rather less readable than the original or a decent translation of it; it hardly qualifies as a commentary at all and in places betrays a shaky grasp of the Greek. J. C. B. Gosling offers a fluent translation of the *Philebus* accompanied by a wealth of exegetical analysis—a true commentary which really grapples with the philosophical and interpretative problems of a difficult but important dialogue, Plato's last extended discussion of ethics and the good life. The book will be invaluable to the student prepared to do his share of the hard work necessary for understanding the *Philebus*. Professor Strauss's book, on the other hand, adds nothing to our knowledge of the *Laws* and will be of no service to students. It could be dismissed at once as useless but for the fact that the author has a considerable reputation and following, not least in the United States, and has influenced a number of scholars working in the field of Greek thought.

Plato's *Laws* is a vast, sprawling work which, unlike the better known *Republic*, is an attempt to make political philosophy practical. Plato goes into elaborate detail in describing the institutions and practices which he thinks are needed for a satisfactory state. The principles of his legislation are clearly the outcome of prolonged reflection on the political life of his time, and as such they require to be interpreted and assessed in their historical context, not only for their contribution to political theory. Professor Strauss, however, proceeds as if the *Laws* was a self-sufficient work existing in a historical vacuum. He shows no interest at all in the realities of political and social life, whether ancient or modern.

The key to the Straussian approach appears already in the title. A Platonic dialogue presents not only philosophical argument but also dramatic action—action which can show us something important about the characters in the drama and their relation to the argument. Accordingly, the Straussian interpreter seeks to recover the action as well as the argument of his chosen dialogue. The intention is admirable, but two reservations must be made about its execution.

First, some Platonic dialogues are very much richer in dramatic action than others. As far as the *Laws* is concerned, it is merely perverse to think it contains much action worthy of the name; to find it, Professor Strauss is constrained to such ploys as counting the number of oaths uttered by this speaker or that, which he supposes to be of immense significance. Second, if you are going to explore the dramatic action you need to be a competent theatre critic. The Straussian critic is in constant danger of confusing a work of drama with a cryptogram. For central to his approach is the assumption that silences and omissions—what the characters do not say—are as important and sometimes more important than what they do say. The objection to this is not only that all too often the alleged unspoken plot is an arbitrary construction by the interpreter, but also that it is used to distract attention from, or even to contradict, the explicit argument of the dialogue. Such obfuscation makes a travesty of Plato's dramatic art.

With relief one returns to Mr Gosling's *Philebus*. With this dialogue the problem for the interpreter is not to see the work in a wider setting but to see how it coheres internally to make a sequential argument. The question under discussion, taken in its broadest terms, is the relative importance of pleasure and intellectual pursuits in the good life, but the twists and turns of the argument create many obscurities. Two metaphysical sections, in which Plato deploys the Pythagorean notions of limit and the unlimited add to the difficulties: they are supposed to help with problems about pleasure and they seem also to mark an important late development in Plato's metaphysics. But they have long resisted efforts to interpret them in terms that would forward the progress of the ethical discussion.

Such being the difficulties of the dialogue, it is hardly surprising that Mr Gosling's notes and commentary are not always easy reading. However, the reader who perseveres is rewarded with valuable discussions both of the general course of the argument and of individual problems encountered on the way. One of the chief merits of the commentary is that it refuses to gloss over difficulties, and one important result of this resolute approach is an impressive new interpretation of the metaphysical sections.

Mr Gosling's book continues the recently launched Clarendon Plato series, but in place of the usual format of translation plus notes, he has translation, notes confined to points of detail, followed by a series of interpretative essays, which give the major part of his commentary in continuous form. Despite the awkwardness of having to read the book in three places at once, this is undoubtedly the right choice for this dialogue, because it enables the commentary to exhibit Plato's argument as a continuous whole. To have done this, to have recovered the coherence and connectedness of the argument, is a considerable achievement.

Armies and emperors

By Michael Grant

KENNETH WELLESLEY :
The Long Year AD 69
234pp. Elek. £6.95.

AD 69 was indeed a long year, as its alternative designation "The Year of the Four Emperors" indicates. The story had really begun in June, AD 68, when the death of Nero brought the five-emperor-long Julio-Claudian dynasty to an end, and Galba began his seven-month reign, to be followed by the even briefer reigns of Otho and Vitellius, which had terminated in suicide and murder (or lynching) respectively before 69 was over: leaving the field clear for Vespasian, who went on to rule for ten years, establishing the Flavian house. P. A. L. Greenhalgh, the author of another recent study of the period of turmoil before Vespasian took over, had entitled his book *The Year of the Four Emperors* yet had paradoxically fixed its starting point at June 68. Kenneth Wellesley, truer to his title—*The Long Year AD 69*—and faithful also to the Roman annalistic tradition, launches his investigation on January 1, 69; and his first chapter, "Prospect and Retrospect", is an informative and entertaining piece of writing about how things were at this moment, when Galba was just beginning to feel a perilous draught.

The year AD 69 is of the utmost importance, because it shows the very worst that could happen to the Roman imperial system—protracted and agonizing civil war. Before and after this dreadful year there were long epochs of internal peace. Yet civil war was always a danger, owing to the almost fatuous inadequacy of arrangements for safeguarding the succession [illegible] or insecure autocratic rulers today please note.

When the storm broke in AD 68-9, the results were so harrowing that the historian Tacitus for one (he was about twelve at the time) could never afterwards forget them. His *Histories* covered the period from 68 to 96, but by a strange chance his very substantial description of the years 68 and 69 is the only part of this great work to have survived. Thank heaven for these books, because they are brilliant—and because we have no other first-class or even second-class account of the civil wars at all. But the existence of these portions of the *Histories* sets modern researchers a problem: the narrative has such a wonderfully authoritative ring, and yet even if, like Mr Wellesley, we do not despise it as military history, we are left with an uneasy feeling that some of these scintillating set-pieces are largely inventions. But how on earth are we to check this impression since there are no other writers to provide an adequate confirmation or contradiction?

Mr Wellesley, in the modern fashion, uses inscriptions, papyri and coins to help him in this task. Speaking with a numismatist's bias, I wish he had used the coins more; I believe there is valuable information about the successive emperors' "images" still to be derived from them. However, Wellesley's methods are very sound, and he displays a dry common sense which prevents his theme from dissolving into chaos. One of his special contributions is a remarkable grip of topography, and especially north Italian topography, which makes it a good deal easier than usual for his readers to gain some idea of what really happened, for example, at the two battles of Cremona or Bedriacum, at which the Vitellians beat the Othonians and later succumbed to the Flavians.

This is to a large extent a story of armies and emperors. Modern historians sometimes dismiss such themes as old fashioned, pointing out, first, that too much emphasis has been laid on military history in the past, and, second, that individual Roman emperors did not direct and change the course of events as much as the ancient writers often lead us to believe that they did. Both criticisms, however, would be misplaced here. It would be hard to envisage the history of AD 69 in any but predominantly military terms. And, as for emperors, sometimes over the centuries they were men of such remarkable ability that they did, by their own exertions, change the course of events to a considerable degree.

However, in regard to the Year of the Four Emperors the position is somewhat different. The first three of them, Galba, Otho and Vitellius, caused events to take a critical turn not because they were able but on the contrary because they were mediocre. Even if Wellesley and Greenhalgh are right in seeing Vitellius as rather more than the squalid and preposterous figure of fun which he is traditionally made to appear—a theory to which his coin publicity may lend some slight support—none of these three rulers were up to their highly exacting job: with the result that all hell broke out. It was an extraordinary stroke of good fortune for the empire that Vespasian turned out to possess just the unspectacular qualities that were needed to restore stability—including a capacity for dull, hard work.

Mr Wellesley has told the whole story vividly and well. He has also set a fashion—or reverted to an earlier fashion—by providing a lavish array of photographic illustrations (some of which are satisfyingly unusual) with adequate descriptive notes.

Across the wide Pacific

By Roger Garfitt

ANTIGONE KEFALA :
The First Journey
127pp. $3.50.

MICHAEL WILDING :
The Short Story Embassy
127pp. $2.95.

KRIS HEMENSLEY :
Here We Are
106pp. $3.50.

RUDI KRAUSMANN :
From Another Shore
Drawings by Brett Whiteley
76pp. $3.95.
Sydney: Wild and Woolley.

The diversity of influences at work on contemporary Australian writing are amply demonstrated in the four writers under review here. All four were born in Europe. Antigone Kefala and Rudi Krausmann remain strongly European in their cultural tradition: Michael Wilding and Kris Hemensley form part of the recent internationalist movement in Australia, which, in so far as it looks to any one culture, looks to California and the counter-culture. There is thus a tension, which one can also observe in Australian poets such as David Malouf, between immigrant nationalism on the one hand and internationalism on the other. One is led to consider what imaginative resources open or close for the writer, in the transition from immigrant to Australian, or from Australian to internationalist.

Antigone Kefala gives the strongest sense of a transition effected without loss of resources. Of the two short novels that make up *The First Journey*, the first, the title novel, is set in Romania, where the author herself was born, of Greek parents. Told in the first person by Alexi, a young cellist taken by his elder brother Tassos to study at the Conservatorium in Bucharest, it is the story of his becoming the protégé of Caragea, a distinguished painter, and falling hopelessly in love with Caragea's wife Anne: a familiar old world milieu and a slightly abrupt plot, but neither really matters, for the novel's unusual quality lies in the imagery and texture of Alexi's inner world, where his impressions of the journey are interwoven with his memories and dreams from childhood. Similarly, "The Boarding House", told in the first person by Meline, a Greek immigrant girl who moves to Sydney on the break-up of her marriage, catches perfectly Meline's gradual awakening to new life out of a double exile, the loss of country reinforced by the loss of the marriage. Antigone Kefala does not always avoid the danger, attendant on this material, of overwriting: what matters more is her willingness to take risks in order to accommodate the strange and potent phenomena of the conscious and the subconscious.

In *The Short Story Embassy*, his second novel, Michael Wilding concentrates on pace and style, and confines any complexity of texture to the question of his narrator's identity—he/she could be any of the characters—a complexity so schematic as to be no complexity at all. One Tichborne, a reviewer, arrives at the Short Story Embassy, staffed by short story writers Wendel, Lazslo and Valda, an ex-poet who is living with Lazslo. Unsettled by hints from Wendel, and unable anyway to trust his good fortune, Lazslo attempts to draw up a comprehensive chart of Valda's previous lovers. "A novel of sexual jealousy", says the blurb, and so it is, as far as it goes. Mr Wilding creates considerable entertainment as he follows Lazslo's agonized prurience into numerical disarray: but he does not venture to explore the darker metamorphoses of prurience, nor in any way test the resources of light comedy, let alone black comedy.

Here We Are consists of short pieces in which narrative is rendered elliptical or left oblique, and style given a deliberately matt finish, in order to convey a sense of being adrift in existence, a kind of Zen errantry. Kris Hemensley clearly has his own voice, and creates some interesting structures, though some seem arbitrary or undeveloped. The way he becomes a character in his own fiction, encountering himself in his choices and through his memories, registering the consequences of his own personality, is particularly effective. His problem, common to writers of his persuasion, is that he has only the one theme, which casts everywhere the same penumbra, so that whatever he writes of, in England or Amsterdam, Arabia or Australia, emerges umbrous and alike.

Simple opposition to social change is rarely a useful strategy for the writer, as the lofty prose poetry of *From Another Shore* demonstrates. Rudi Krausmann's sense of exile, from the century as much as from the continent, is clearly genuine: but "honour" and "passion" are hopeless weapons with which to engage urban industrialism. Only "The Fish", in its detachment from human activity, offers an element in which Mr Krausmann seems at home.

Dream boy

By Frank Pike

DAVID MALOUF :
Johnno
170pp. Prentice-Hall International/University of Queensland Press. £2.65.

ALAN MARSHALL :
Short Stories
169pp. Nelson (Australia). $A6.95.

To those who know Australians rather than Australia it often seems that there are as many Australias as there are Australians. Two of them emerge from these volumes. David Malouf's novel, with its first-person narrator and strongly autobiographical flavour, starts off with a convincing account, finely written without fine writing, of childhood and early adolescence in a suburb of Brisbane during the Second World War—a war, for all that its existence pervaded the whole of life in and out of school, that remained a remote but familiar mystery:

> And what would happen when the war was over? I knew the lights would come on again, all over the world. . . . But what else? What else? I think I expected some miraculous transformation might take place in us . . . and I longed for it painfully. The end of the war! Would it come when I was eight, ten, thirteen? I dreamed of it, impatient with the present, fearful of being disappointed, as one dreams of growing up.

Along with this is an unaffected and densely detailed evocation of a particular way of life at a particular time; urban, unspectacular, but adding another dimension to the potential bewilderments of childhood. "What an extraordinary thing it is, that I should be here, rather than somewhere else." This kind of thing may have been done before, but here it is done again admirably. Whether the novel as a whole is a success is less certain. It describes the narrator's intermittent relationship (the kind which is sustained by unanswered letters) from schooldays on, with the hero of the title (his name a quintessentially Australian contraction one hesitates to call a diminutive), one of those magnetic figures of childhood for whom adults are always predicting a sticky end. Were the novel more pretentious, one might say of Johnno that he is infected with a divine discontent which [illegible] as much in whoring, [illegible] and idiosyncratic anarchism [illegible] and eclectic reading [illegible] eclectic occupations [illegible] he kills himself. Again, such charismatic, self-destructive figures are not unfamiliar in life or literature, but the specially Australian significance of Johnno's Weltschmerz remains as elusive as the Australian Dream mentioned on the dust-jacket. Nevertheless no geographically conditioned insights are necessary.

Alan Marshall's country is Australia for the Australians. His (mostly very) short stories, many of which appeared in *Meanjin Quarterly*, are peopled by dingo-trappers, prospectors or small-town worthies of the outback. They have, and celebrate, old-fashioned virtues. Alan Marshall "needs little introduction to Australian readers". The little introduction is by Jack Lindsay.

Division street

By John Sutherland

PETER CAREY :
The Fat Man in History
141pp. Prentice-Hall International/University of Queensland Press. £2.80.

MURRAY BAIL :
Contemporary Portraits and other Stories
182pp. Prentice-Hall International/University of Queensland Press. £3.45 (paperback, £1.55).

Both these sets of stories are markedly international—in mode at least; both influenced by Borges and Kafka. Of the two writers Peter Carey is the angrier and more aggressively Australian. In one of his stories ("A Windmill in the West") Australia has been split down the middle by an electrified fence, one side of which is United States territory; in another the American "shadow" industry is shown addicting the world to unspecified onanistic indulgences; in "American Dreams" a whole Australian township, despised by its inhabitants, is affectionately rebuilt by the one citizen who loves it. After his death the model becomes a kind of Australian Disneyland for American tourists:

> The Americans pay one dollar for the right to take our photographs. Having paid the money they are worried about being cheated. They spend their time being disappointed and I spend my time feeling guilty, that I have somehow let them down by growing older and sadder.

At his [illegible] Mr Carey seems to [illegible] of Australia [illegible]ized or (as in the title-piece) in a state of totalitarian oppression.

"Withdrawal", the best story in the collection, is also the longest and most naturalistic. Mr Carey often seems constricted by the dimensions of the short story; and one has a sense of condensed novels in which the process of condensation has not been entirely successful.

Murray Bail's stories are elegant, cool, and cleverer than Peter Carey's. "Heubler", the opening piece, concerns a photographer who aims to "photographically document . . . the existence of everyone alive" (one thinks of Borges's "Library of Babel" and "Funes the Memorious"). The writer suggests twenty-three subjects for him to start on. There follows a series of profiles including "At least one person who is convinced his or her experiences would make an interesting novel" (blank page). The second story, "Life of the Party", has the host of a Sunday barbecue retreat up a gum-tree to watch the increasingly bacchanalian activities. This withdrawn, neurasthenic observer is very much in Mr Bail's style. "The Drover's Wife" is more playful: the narrator claims to recognize his absconded wife in the famous painting and from the pictorial evidence tries to reconstruct her life in the thirty years since she left him.

Mr Bail has spent part of his writing life abroad and has published quite extensively outside Australia. A couple of pieces in *Contemporary Portraits* may, however, be seen as peculiarly Australian. In "The Silence" a solitary rabbit-catcher contrives to avoid a fortnightly exchange of words with the lorry driver who calls for his catch. "Ore", a parable on the Poseidon hysteria, has an obsessive speculator whose head turns to copper ore, to the ultimate enrichment of a team of excavating brain surgeons.

Many inventions

By F. M. L. Thompson

HUGH BARTY-KING:
Scratch a Surveyor . . .
273pp. Helicnann. £6.50.

Hugh Barty-King claims that *Scratch a Surveyor* is "the nearest anyone will ever get to telling the story of Drivers Jonas, traced through the diaries, letters, memos, reports which might have been written—and some that were—between 1725 and 1975". The book is written to commemorate the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of what most surely be the oldest surviving firm of surveyors in the world. One must acknowledge the achievement of one more self fulfilling prophecy in the fascinating story of historical writing, for since Mr Barty-King has written the book it must be "the nearest anyone will ever get . . ." No one is likely to attempt the task again.

There was a very good subject here. Competent business histories are scarce enough in all conscience; histories of professional firms—aside, perhaps, from architects—are practically non-existent. Hence it is a sad thing for all those who take a serious interest in the professions, and indeed for those who have a passing thought for the history of their country, that a splendid opportunity of passing in review 250 years of an expanding economy and changing society as seen through the experience of a single firm, whose unbroken continuity links vegetable growing in seventeenth-century Wandsworth with the dizzied heights of late twentieth-century property development, should have been used as an occasion for a display of undisciplinary imaginary history. Although the author states that there are no diaries, no journals, no letters, no minutes, no memoirs—in short, no business records—it is still possible to ask the question whether there was in other way but to invent the whole building. But since that is the way he did choose, his book should first of all be approached as fiction.

No one who has ever read a historical novel, or indeed any other sort of novel, will find that an all easy to do. The book has no structure save that of a chance collection of improbable scrapbooks containing the leavings of family affairs through generations of relentlessly wooden materialism such as might have been kept by a whole succession of tough, unsentimental, and rapacious grandmothers, all convinced that only the money-making activities of their progeny were worthy of cuttings and memoirs, and all outrageously successful in tearing odd pages out of the office journals every now and then to stick in their family albums.

It has long ago ceased to be a sin for a novelist to fail to tell a story, to omit any plot, to dispense with any recognizably human characters, to exclude sex, and not to bother with writing connected prose anyway. But it may not be all that old-fashioned to suppose that it will be a very rare bird indeed who will find drama in sombre and complacent accounts of imaginary estate valuations and auctions, and an even rarer one, if such exists, whose juices will flow on discovering the solitary fictitious love letter in this collection, in which a young surveyor is supposed to have pursued his lass with a riveting description of how to prepare the particulars of sale for a Welsh estate. The one real love letter, describing the sublime rigours of a Swiss holiday spent traversing the Strehlegg and Monch Joch passes to a Driver girl back home, stands out with the mid-Victorian authenticity of its restrained manliness, carefully offhand introduction of the moon, and complete absence of any reference to business matters; but in any other setting it would not be remarkable.

Historians will make even less of this book than seekers after historical romance. Admittedly it is not clear whether they are intended to suppose that one knowledgeable and successful Driver believed, in 1769, that the population of London "almost doubled from five to ten million since the Revolution of 1688", and that another Driver believed, in 1799, that the population of Britain was twenty million, or that Mr Barty-King also believes such fairytales. To be told, however, that one of the most eminent surveyors and valuers of his day thought, in 1833, that a high rate of years' purchase and a low price of land were synonymous, when in fact they are opposites, strains credulity; to find the senior assistant in the firm, in 1920, recording that a Pullman train from King's Cross took him to Reading, breaks it finally. An even mildly competent firm could not have been run by such silly people. And yet we are informed that a few years later, in 1922, the firm decided after careful thought that Chester was the most convenient location for a new branch office for the purpose of supervising the northern estates of Greenwich Hospital, which were about 150 miles away in Northumberland. Perhaps land agency really was most successful when carried on at arm's length.

On the whole, though, it seems probable that the author has not done justice to the intelligence of this alliance of professional dynasties. Few will forgive him for recklessly mixing real and fake with never a clue as to which is which until, at the end of the book, a brief author's afterword offers a rudimentary explanation. This might be a shame. Not for the reasons given by the author, thus this is not a book for scholars but one which should be swallowed without worrying too much about identifying the likely and the unlikely. But because where historians laboriously dig up a few facts and spend much time and sweat in inventing conclusions, Mr Barty-King has spent much time in inventing his evidence and has not dug up any conclusions at all.

Time check

CECIL CLUTTON AND GEORGE DANIEL:
Clocks and Watches.
The Collection of the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers
123pp. Sotheby Parke Bernet. £15

This is a most worthwhile book: the collector of watches and clocks and the student of horological history, and is worthy of the great collection of 692 pieces now housed next to the Guildhall library in the city of Leeds. It supersedes Baillie's smaller catalogue of 1958 since which date many additions have been made to the collection.

The book opens with an account of the history of the company from since it received its Royal Charter in 1631; then follow a short preface and the two main chapters on watches and clocks respectively, each subdivided into several sections; and finally three short accessory chapters. Each chapter consists of detailed descriptions of items in the collection, preceded by a most readable and scholarly introduction. Illustrations contained appear beside the catalogue entries, though this entails considerable loss of pictorial detail.

The book is in all other ways strongly to be recommended, for the importance of the material catalogued, the exceptional detailed knowledge and expertise of both authors in their field, and for the interest and clarity of their explanations.

F. A. B. Ward